

Alabama Teacher Quantity and Quality Roundtable

Final Report

Report commissioned by State Superintendent Eric Mackey

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with support from the Southern Regional Education Board

Executive Summary

In September 2019, the Alabama Department of Education, at the direction of State Superintendent Eric Mackey, began convening a group of K-12 education advocates and association leaders, higher education deans and state-level government representatives to continue the work of the Alabama Teacher Shortage Taskforce. The focus of this group, the *Alabama Teacher Quantity and Quality Roundtable* (referred to as the TQ² Roundtable), is to seek innovative solutions to the teacher shortage crisis. The TQ² Roundtable was supported by a team of policy specialists, researchers and facilitators from the Southern Regional Education Board. A membership list is provided in Appendix A.

The Self-Governing Charge of the TQ² Roundtable

For key agencies and shareholders to collaborate and take action to increase the quantity and quality of teachers in Alabama classrooms and how we prepare, license, hire, support and retain them.

In 2020, the TQ² Roundtable members evaluated the state's teacher shortage issue, previous efforts to reverse this shortage, current state policies, and research and best practices from around the nation with the goal of finding solutions not yet undertaken in Alabama. Initially, the TQ² Roundtable determined to explore the challenges of: raising the esteem of the teaching profession; improving teacher working conditions; increasing the number of pathways into teaching; increasing the diversity of the workforce; simplifying certification; and improving state data collection.

To identify innovative solutions, the TQ² Roundtable undertook an analysis of Alabama's current laws, regulations, and review processes (see Appendix C) governing educator preparation, certification, and learning and growth to identify the successes and challenges presented within each area. From there, the members assessed the potential impact that various improvements may have on the teacher shortage issue to identify a high-impact strategy for the state to work toward. To take steps toward this long-term goal, the Roundtable reimagined multiple pathways into teaching that would allow for increased diversity of the workforce, comprehensive early career supports, and trials of successful advanced teacher roles from other states and districts.

The TQ² Roundtable recommends conducting a Teacher Pathways, Support, and Advancement pilot program. The goals of the pilot:

- More options and routes for Alabama youth and career changers to try out the teaching profession with pay
- Better support for teachers in their early years
- Sustainable advancement options for effective teachers to act as leaders from the classroom and be guaranteed compensation for moving up in these roles

The group also determined the current teacher certification policy conveys misaligned values and presents many unnecessary barriers into the teaching profession. This policy should be prioritized as a key long-term strategy for improving the quantity and quality of the teaching workforce.

This report outlines the pilot and other related recommendations and proposals for action generated by the TQ² Roundtable.

Introduction: The Current State of the Teaching Profession

Alabama's continued economic growth is dependent upon educating its next generation, but like many states across the country, Alabama faces an acute teacher shortage in its public education system. Nearly every school district in the state has turned to hiring emergency and provisionally licensed teachers, and 30% of all classrooms are being taught by teachers lacking discipline-specific training, having neither a major nor a minor in the discipline they are teaching. The shortages are particularly critical in math, science, and special education (Bellwether Education Partners, 2019), and in grades 7 to 12. In fact, all 70 schools in Alabama with more than 10% of teachers practicing under a provisional or emergency certificate were middle grades schools or high schools (Alabama Teacher Shortage Taskforce Report, 2019). What's more, Alabama's pipeline of future teachers has diminished. Since 2010, there has been a 40% decrease in students entering teacher education programs. According to 2018 ACT data, only 4% of Alabama's high school juniors indicated they would consider teaching as a career, down significantly from 12% four years before.

Alabama's teacher workforce must better reflect the student population. "Minority students often perform better on standardized tests, have improved attendance, and are suspended less frequently (which may suggest either different degrees of behavior or different treatment, or both) when they have at least one same-race teacher" (Figlio 2017). In Alabama, 79% of teachers are white and only 19% are black, yet white students make up 55% of the student population and 33% are black. More than half of the state's black teachers are working in the 25 school districts where more than 90% of students are in poverty (Crain 2017). Furthermore, approximately 80% of teachers are female. A teacher workforce more closely reflecting student demographics would benefit all; improved achievement is also documented, for example, in white students who have a minority teacher.

At least part of the teacher shortage can be explained in financial terms. Teachers in the United States are paid on average 19.2% less than their college-educated peers per week; in Alabama teachers are paid 24.6% less (Economic Policy Institute, 2020). Historically speaking, teacher salaries are worth less now than they were a decade ago, after adjusting for inflation. Data from the ACT points to low pay as the number one reason students from Gen Z do not enter teaching, even when interested, followed closely by lack of career advancement opportunities.

For those who choose to enter the profession anyway, retention remains a problem. Annually, around 8% of American educators leave the classroom, costing districts up to \$21,000 per teacher in turnover expenses. Turnover is the highest in the South. According to a recent national estimate, about 18% of teachers leave the profession before completing their fifth year in the classroom (Learning Policy Institute, 2017). National surveys cite challenging working conditions, including lack of support and overwhelming stress, as reasons educators leave the profession.

Alabama's state legislature has passed various measures to prevent additional critical vacancies, such as extending the validity of emergency teaching certificates to two years and attracting new teachers by raising salaries, reviewing retirement benefits, and adding new scholarships and loan repayment programs. While these measures certainly help in the short term, they are not comprehensive solutions to the teacher shortage problem. The Teacher Shortage Task Force convened last year and issued a report with over 30 recommendations aimed at better recruitment and retention of quality educators. Yet, as interest in the profession continues to decline and retirement rates increase over the next ten years, state leaders agree that more innovative solutions and long-term, comprehensive strategies are needed to resolve this crisis.

Recruit and Retain the Teacher Workforce of the Future

In September 2019, the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE), at the direction of State Superintendent Eric Mackey, began convening a group of K-12 education advocates and association leaders, higher education deans and state-level government representatives to continue the work of the Alabama Teacher Shortage Taskforce. The charge of this group, the *Alabama Teacher Quantity and Quality Roundtable*, was to collaboratively conduct an analysis of Alabama's current policies, programs and data related to the state of the teacher workforce and identify innovative, comprehensive solutions and action items around recruitment and retention of quality educators.

Building upon the work of the Teacher Shortage Taskforce and ongoing efforts throughout the state, the TQ² Roundtable recommends a long-term, three-pronged approach to recruitment and retention:

- Offer more options and routes for Alabama youth and career changers to try out the teaching profession with pay, and remove unnecessary barriers to entry
- Provide better support for teachers in their early years
- Create sustainable advancement options for effective teachers to act as leaders from the classroom and be guaranteed compensation for moving up in these roles

Each strategy must work to establish more opportunities for future and current teachers, especially those of color as well as male teachers, while also providing greater incentives for joining and remaining in the teaching profession.

Alabama should continue to look to expanding strategies such as dual enrollment, grow-your-own programs, alternative preparation for career changers, recruiting retired teachers from out of state, and providing financial assistance to teaching students. Many of these targeted strategies are limited in their reach, yet they all connect to the three principles above which bring a holistic vision of reform to the teaching profession.

The TQ² Roundtable recommends that education leaders, policymakers, advocates, and most importantly educators, work together to pilot these strategies to expand teaching pathways, supports and career advancement. In addition to a pilot, the TQ² Roundtable also provides further long-term solutions including redesigning teacher certification, fully integrating data collection, and expanding non-traditional pathways into the teaching profession.

Teacher Pathways, Support and Advancement Pilot Proposal

The TQ² Roundtable proposes the Alabama State Department of Education — with support from A+ Education Partnership and the Alabama Education Association, and in partnership with the Alabama Commission on Higher Education, several public and private colleges and universities, and an external leader in collective leadership models — launch a three-year Teacher Pathways, Support and Advancement Pilot program. This pilot should be funded through allocations from the state legislature and potentially supplemented with new grant funding.

This proposal models a teaching career continuum that would raise the esteem of the teaching profession, create additional pathways into teaching, greatly improve on the support provided to teachers, and allow for career advancement while staying in the classroom.

The pilot provides an opportunity for the state to lead a group of districts in experimenting with promising strategies to increase teacher recruitment and retention through a focus on eliminating teachers' top burdens: high stress, inadequate support, and beleaguered value. The pilot will test the efficacy of a flexible model that gives districts and schools the opportunity to reimagine school and teacher leadership structures, how teachers are supported in their practice, and how future teachers experience hands-on learning.

This pilot will provide the opportunity for districts and schools to test out various teacher supports and new roles for current and future teachers. It will provide data on the success of the approaches taken that will connect to the Roundtable's vision for teacher certification reform. But it will not directly inform how to amend state certification policy, another of the Roundtable's recommendations.

Pilot Mission and Goals

The Teacher Pathways, Support and Advancement Pilot project mission is to test and assess various strategies that could lead to more successful recruitment and retention of teachers in Alabama. It centers on three main goals or principles:

1. To test new teacher residency pathways for those interested in education and open more avenues for interested candidates to gain experience in the teaching profession.
2. To experiment with different early-career support structures including a co-teaching structure for degree-seekers, a standardized mentorship model for new teachers, and professional development plans and stipends.
3. To experiment and test multiple advanced roles for highly effective and skilled teachers — including selection, training and sustainable compensation for these roles — to create flexible collective leadership models that bolster the early career supports and professional growth focus of goals one and two.

The three goals or principles of this pilot are connected, yet each is a major undertaking on its own. While many experienced educators from around the state have or are exploring complimentary pilots testing some of these goals, there is currently no state-level team with the capacity to lead a state pilot. Other states — like Arkansas, North Carolina, and Texas — that have implemented similar pilots have turned to outside assistance as they face similar capacity issues.

The success of this project stems from experimenting and assessing the successes and challenges of implementing a flexible model of collective leadership, strong collegial supports, and hands-on teaching practice in a variety of public schools across the state. This flexible model would restructure Pre-K–12 schools to extend the reach of excellent teachers, principals, and their teams to more students, for more pay, within recurring school budgets. Students gain consistent access to excellent teaching. Great teachers advance and lead small teaching teams from the classroom, providing daily support to their colleagues. Principals can drive change through collected and distributed leadership. Yearlong, paid residencies make on-the-job learning possible before teaching and leading and add to the collective team-teaching approach. Partnerships with higher education, other districts, and local advocates can help strengthen these strategies which require quality preparation of new candidates and teacher leaders. A flexible model of this nature embodies all the elements of the TQ² Roundtable’s vision.

Potential wins from the pilot:

- Increases student achievement
- Strengthens student learning, even with a new teacher
- Yields an outstanding, diverse teacher pipeline
- Creates a collective team instructional leadership approach — rather than an administrator solely coaching all teachers no matter the grade or subject
- Retains excellent teachers and extends their reach to more students beyond those assigned to them as teacher of record

- Makes advanced role financial support feasible and sustainable
- Provides more intensive support for early-career and struggling teachers through advanced teacher-led team mentoring
- Promotes faster growth in teacher candidates
- Makes residencies sustainable and scalable
- Makes residency financial support feasible, diversifying pipeline

Required changes for the pilot to be implemented:

- Creation of new pathways/roles and advanced teacher roles
- More district and school leader autonomy over budgets
- More district and school leader autonomy over class sizes, rostering and line of sight requirements
- New teacher salary allocations from the state legislature (see Funding section for details)

Pilot Principle 1: New Pathways into Teaching

A key strategy in increasing the interest in teaching and recruiting highly prepared, diverse new teachers into the workforce is for young adults to become exposed to the career at an early age and receive extensive hands-on experience. For Alabama to determine how it can increase exposure and hands-on experience, there must be trials of new pathways and extended teacher clinical experiences.

Yearlong teacher residency programs are increasing throughout the country as the leading practice for better preparation of teacher candidates. The SREB Teacher Preparation Commission in 2018 concluded: “Researchers have not identified individual courses or specific program approaches associated with candidate effectiveness. However, research suggests that intensive methods instruction and high-quality clinical experiences have an outsized impact.”

In Texas, a pilot has begun partnering several school districts with local universities to supply approximately one dozen residency teachers to schools participating in a collective leadership model. The residency teachers, called Reach Residents, support advanced-role teachers and work 3.5-4 days per week, receiving a \$24,000 stipend for the year paid out of existing district funds that have been realigned to support the collective staff team approach (US PREP 2020).

New pathways into teaching to be tested in the Alabama pilot are:

- *Full-Year Teacher Residents* – teacher candidates who receive on-the-job-learning while completing a degree and meet one of two descriptions:
 - obtained at least an associate degree or 60+ hours of college credit and are currently enrolled in a traditional or alternative teacher preparation program
 - enrolled in their final year of an educator preparation program (bachelor’s or master’s) needing to fulfill their program’s student teaching requirement

The Teacher Pathways, Support and Advancement Pilot will assist participating districts and schools with fostering partnerships with educator preparation programs to test out these new pathway models in connection with a team-teaching approach of collective leadership. Both new types of teacher candidates will be placed in a pilot school and work full-time (4 days per week) under the supervision of an advanced role teacher, in support of his/her classroom as well as a teaching team. These teacher candidates will receive an annual stipend paid for out of state-provided district funds for sustainability purposes. Participating schools and partnering teacher preparation programs will receive collaborative technical assistance to include teacher resident roles on advanced teacher-led teams. This structure meets immediate personnel needs of the school districts, ensures high-quality development of novice teacher candidates, helps districts build strong relationships with these candidates, and establishes a sustainable, scalable staffing model that increases student achievement.

Creating new teacher resident pathways will involve ongoing partnerships with state agencies and higher education to restructure education preparation curricula to facilitate these full-time, work-based opportunities. Education preparation programs will also need to work out scheduling with partner schools and districts. These changes will require modifying ALSDE's Education Preparation Program guidelines and Continuous Improvement in Educator Preparation (CIEP) process.

Pilot Principle 2: Better Early-Career Supports

Mentor support is one of the most promising and overwhelmingly successful ways to grow and retain new educators no matter their preparation pathway (Boren 2020). New teachers need this support not only for growth in practice, but also emotionally. Emergency and provisionally certified teachers who have yet to undergo full preparation especially need mentor support for instructional coaching. A leading researcher in this field, Dr. Richard Ingersoll, reviewed multiple studies on induction programs and found three overarching positive effects (Ingersoll 2011):

- *Teacher retention:* Participation in an induction program increases the likelihood that a teacher will remain in the field and at that particular school. Furthermore, studies examined in the 1990's found that teachers who participated in induction programs typically averaged a three-year retention rate around 90%, while new teachers who did not averaged a retention rate around 70% or less.
- *Teaching instruction:* "The majority of studies reviewed showed that beginning teachers who participated in some kind of induction performed better at various aspects of teaching, such as keeping students on task, using effective student questioning practices, adjusting classroom activities to meet students' interests, maintaining a positive classroom atmosphere, and demonstrating successful classroom management."
- *Student achievement:* "Almost all of the studies showed that students of beginning teachers who participated in induction had higher scores, or gains, on academic achievement tests."

Alabama currently has the Alabama Teacher Mentoring Program, which has recently added a second year of mentoring for teachers. In the ATMP, mentors include both currently employed and retired teachers. The currently employed teacher continues with their normal teaching responsibilities, as well as mentoring one teacher. During the 2020-2021 school year, the New Teacher Center has partnered with the ATMP to provide comprehensive mentoring support to eight pilot districts, as well as virtual professional development sessions.

The Teacher Pathways, Support and Advancement Pilot will build upon the current mentorship program by helping participating districts and schools provide individualized, intensive mentorship supports to early career and struggling teachers and new professional development opportunities (e.g., micro-credentials). Successful mentorship hinges on direct, regular coaching support by a trusted colleague with effective competencies, skills, and pedagogy directly tied to the needs of a teachers' own students. A collective leadership approach, where advanced-role teachers take on this type of support of a team of their colleagues, provides increased interaction over the typical model of an instructional coach assigned to one or more entire schools.

Pilot Principle 3: Advanced Teacher Roles and Collective Leadership

With mentorship being the most effective way to grow early-career and struggling teachers, and retention of the teaching workforce — especially high-quality teachers — being paramount to ending teacher shortages, more districts and states are turning to teacher leadership. The Education Commission of the States reviewed state teacher leadership and licensure policies in 2018 and found that 22 states now offer a teacher leader license or endorsement and 17 states have adopted teacher leadership standards. Of these, eight states (Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Hawaii, Michigan, New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon) require teachers to show advanced effectiveness to earn these licenses.

Establishing advanced teacher roles in state and district policy ensures that highly effective teachers have career advancement opportunities, share in the leadership function of schools, and mentor their peers, all while remaining in the classroom and directly continuing to advance student learning at high rates.

The Center for Teacher Quality cites research finding that “schools staffed by credentialed and experienced teachers who work together over an extended time generate the largest student achievement gains. Students of less-experienced teachers who had access to the most accomplished colleagues made the very greatest achievement growth gains.” Lack of instructional supports, as well as prescriptive and micro-managed leadership, has been shown to drive teachers from the profession. Teachers who are empowered to lead are more likely to remain in teaching. Furthermore, the spread of effective teaching practices facilitated by teacher leadership efforts is a critical component in school success.

A Brookings-American Institutes of Research study found “statistically significant improvements in student learning associated with implementation of the Opportunity Culture program in both subjects [reading and math] analyzed for the study.” This program promotes multiple roles of

teacher leadership and direct, daily coaching of peers (typically one coach per six team teachers, compared to standard practice of one coach per school). “When it partners with districts and schools, the program offers different models that attempt to make highly effective teachers more influential on student learning. It accomplishes this by directly increasing strong teachers’ student loads (for example, through larger class sizes or rotating multiple classes through various learning stations), or indirectly reaching more students by becoming instructional coaches to teams of teachers (typically in the same grade or subject area).”

The Teacher Pathways, Support and Advancement Pilot will test two advanced teaching roles:

- *Master teachers* — teachers demonstrating increased effectiveness who would thrive in stretching their reach to teach more students directly
- *Lead teachers (of multiple classrooms)* — teachers demonstrating high effectiveness and adult coaching competencies who would thrive in
 - Leading, co-planning, & analyzing data for a teaching team (which could include a master teacher, new and veteran teachers, and a teacher resident)
 - Observing, giving feedback, and coaching team teachers
 - Co-teaching and modeling for team teachers
 - Continuing to teach some portion of the time

The pilot will assist participating districts and schools with establishing these roles, eligibility and selection criteria, advanced teacher training, and collective leadership best practices. With the assistance of the external specialist’s proven model of success, teams of teachers and school leaders will choose and tailor their school model to:

1. Grow more students with excellent teachers and the teaching team approach
2. Pay teachers more for extending their reach beyond their own classroom
3. Strive to fund advanced teacher pay within regular budgets
4. Provide protected in-school time and clarity about how to use it for planning, collaboration, and development
5. Match authority and accountability to each person’s responsibilities

Leaders in both Arkansas and North Carolina began piloting similar collective leadership models with advanced teaching roles after seeing very successful models take off in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Indianapolis, and Syracuse school districts in 2014-15, as well as the Texas Education Agency implementing in numerous districts in 2015-16.

Long-Term Commitment

The cornerstone of the Teacher Pathways, Support and Advancement Pilot, and potential future scaling of successful strategies identified within, is building in sustainability from the start. Instituting new pathways, early-career supports and advanced teaching roles in various districts requires agreement by district leaders and higher education partners on key principles and standards at the forefront, a commitment to innovation, and an openness to change processes and policies.

To test the pathways, early-career supports and advanced roles, districts will need to review and revise budget allocations, class scheduling policies, planning time, class sizes, rostering policies and teacher recruitment and selection policies and processes. An external leader in collective leadership models, with the backing of ALSDE, will be able to provide in-depth support to districts to accomplish these changes in a purposeful and strategic manner. These process changes made at the forefront will allow participating districts to sustain their own individualized model well into the future. Key to this sustainability is district leaders and school leaders having the autonomy to rethink their budgets to accommodate salaries for teacher residents and advanced-role teachers out of their existing budgets which include federal, state and local funding. This can be done with support by the external specialist by reviewing flexible program dollars and upcoming, planned staff vacancies at the school and district level to realign budgets for staff positions in the collective leadership teams. Low-income districts will have considerable flexibility within their Title I and II dollars.

In addition, the TQ² Roundtable recommends that the Alabama State Legislature commit to waiving the Foundation Salary Calculation to the pilot districts and providing additional, permanent monies to support the advanced-role teachers and new teacher resident positions needed in each participating district to allow more budgeting flexibility for pilot schools while maintaining sustainability standards (see Funding section).

Recommended Pilot Design and Parameters

Pilot Prerequisites

This pilot should last a minimum of three years and should begin in the upcoming fall semester after the following has occurred:

- The Alabama State Legislature has approved and funded this pilot appropriately. The State Board of Education and ALSDE will oversee this project allocation, managing project contracts and department costs that support district participation and project monitoring.
- The Alabama State Board of Education and/or ALSDE have entered into a partnership agreement with an appropriate, experienced external specialist that offers successful, comprehensive strategies for testing out the three main pilot goals listed above. Additional partnerships with state and local advocates may be desired to supplement support to the participating districts.
- ALSDE has completed at least one semester of the educator evaluation system pilot.
- ALSDE has partnered with two or more two- and four-year colleges and universities to offer key supports, such as professional development, micro-credentials, and teacher resident candidate selection, etc., to the participating districts.
- State education leaders and policymakers have cleared all policy barriers that would limit flexible school staffing redesigns, including:
 - Limits on class sizes
 - Line of sight requirements

- Teacher and student rostering requirements in a state growth system
- Restrictions on reallocating funds
- Availability of an aligned teacher evaluation rubric
- A state-level sustainable support team has been established. This support team will shadow the external specialist for the first two years to learn how to support districts and schools for future scaling. This team will need to be led by a director overseeing not only the management and analysis of the pilot but also a team of support staff with enough capacity to directly support the design and implementation of the model in districts and schools statewide.

Funding

To better facilitate and promote the new pathways and career advancements within this pilot, the TQ² Roundtable recommends that the Alabama State Legislature fund the pilot in two ways to maintain sustainability standards:

1. A sustainable, state-supported structure to finance advanced-role teacher stipends and the salaries and benefits to new teacher resident roles
2. A temporary pilot fund to furnish the one-time costs of administering the Teacher Pathways, Support and Advancement Pilot

The TQ² Roundtable recommends that the Alabama State Legislature grant a waiver to the initial pilot districts for the Foundation Salary Calculation, allowing district and school leaders the flexibility to re-allocate budgets to support the new teaching roles defined in the pilot and ensure districts are held harmless. Sustainability is key and thus districts and schools will ideally fund their desired teaching staff salaries and benefits within recurring budgets. An external specialist with expertise in this area will be able to assist districts in flexible budgeting, with the approved waiver. However, certain districts may incur increased costs beyond their capacity to support teacher residents and advanced role teacher stipends. A state-legislated commitment financially supporting these new teacher roles is necessary to ensure that schools and districts can continue to employ and pay teachers for serving in this way. Without a commitment to permanent funding stability, schools may be forced to end the collective leadership model, even if it proves to be successful. The following additional monies may be requested for allocation per teacher per school, as determined by the school and district design teams in Year 1:

- \$9,000-\$14,000 per Lead Teacher for Year 2 and Year 3
- \$3,000-\$7,000 per Master Teacher for Year 2 and Year 3
- \$23,000-\$25,000 plus benefits per Teacher Resident for Year 2 and Year 3

Each participating school and district will submit their design plans to the state in Year 1 with their request for the additional stipend and salary and benefit dollars needed to support their school design. Not every school will need the same number of advanced-role teachers or teacher residents.

After the pilot, additional allocations for advanced-role stipends and teacher resident salaries and benefits can be phased in to further districts, with the appropriate pilot districts receiving the funds in Years 2 and 3 of the pilot and additional districts receiving funding post-pilot as they institute the roles deemed successful within their schools. However, the legislature may wish to reserve the right to wait for pilot results before outlining the details of the post-pilot allocations — as it may behoove the state to reconsider the structure and calculation processes within the Total Foundation Program more holistically.

The temporary costs for this pilot may include:

- Contracting with an external specialist for design assistance, trainings, technical assistance, and monitoring guidance. The external specialist will have worked with states leading similar pilots and should provide reasonable estimates for direct support to the pilot districts. Based on two common pricing models, estimates are typically per-district annual costs or cohort annual costs. A significant cost savings can be achieved by contracting on a cohort structure, as previously mentioned. Per-district estimated costs range from \$140,000-\$250,000 per year depending on district size. Using a cohort structure can lessen these costs significantly. An estimate of total cost for this bonus increase is not provided in this document.
- Supplying grants to participating districts to support any of the following at the district's discretion:
 - Staff costs for attending centralized cohort trainings
 - Securing additional technical assistance with the external specialist or higher education partner if needed
 - Creating a new district director for school redesign (considered helpful for districts with 20+ schools)

The district grant amounts are higher for low- and middle-income districts and less for high-income districts.

- ALSDE will need to hire or realign staff to manage the pilot program, to facilitate the work of the external specialist with the participating districts, and to collect, analyze, and share pilot data and results. A portion of these funds may be redirected from ALSDE for an external entity to conduct the pilot results analysis.
- Establishing and hiring the state-level support team. This team should have enough capacity to support the districts and schools in the third year of the pilot and to work to set up processes for statewide scaling. A minimum of three staff is recommended.
- Meeting costs and resources for centralized cohort training sessions (refreshments, resources, etc.)

The following budget table outlines estimated costs for the temporary pilot allocation only. The figures are based on similar pilots in other states, with a moderate level of support provided by an external specialist in the first two years and this responsibility transferring to the state-level support team in Year 3. The final pilot project budget will largely depend on the number of participating districts and schools.

Budget Estimates	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Small District Design Cohort Design and Training (for 4 districts); Provided by External Specialist	\$338,000	\$254,000	\$0	\$592,000
Small District Grants (up to 2 low- or mid-income districts)	\$20,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$120,000
Small District Grants (up to 2 high-income districts)	\$10,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$70,000
Large District Design Cohort Design and Training (for 2 districts); Provided by External Specialist	\$285,000	\$254,000	\$0	\$539,000
Large District Grants (2 low- or mid-income districts)	\$40,000	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$200,000
State-level Support team (3 staff)	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$1,200,000
ALSDE Pilot Management and Monitoring	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$450,000
Meeting and Resource Costs	\$50,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$200,000
Estimated Annual Total	\$1,293,000	\$1,293,000	\$785,000	
Estimated Project Total				\$3,371,000

Pilot Planning, District Selection, and Equity

Once the state has approved and funded this three-year pilot, ALSDE and the appropriate partners mentioned above will work to create a detailed scope of work with the external specialist staff skilled in advising state leaders on project parameters and use of funds. ALSDE will also implement the district application process, with the external specialist guidance, and select between *four to six diverse public-school districts* to participate. The number of districts may depend on the final amount of funding allocated by the state legislature for this project. This application process should allow the state to determine and select a diverse group of school districts that value the principles of the pilot, are committed to testing all the model aspects, and are open to restructuring certain processes and policies to allow for creative class scheduling, new roles, new compensation methods, and increased teacher collaboration. This process may include a written application, interview, and data sharing agreement.

Participating districts similar in size will be grouped together to form two design cohorts, to achieve a significant cost savings to Alabama related to the external specialist technical assistance contract:

- *Small District Pilot Design Cohort:* This cohort will consist of the two to four smaller districts selected from districts with one to 19 schools.
- *Large District Pilot Design Cohort:* This cohort will consist of one to two larger districts selected to participate, from district with 20+ schools. If or as additional larger districts are selected to participate, each cohort should include a maximum of two large districts.

The two pilot design cohorts will meet in a centralized location for all information, design, and training sessions. For example, the Small District Design Cohort may meet in the central region of the state, while the Large District Design Cohort could meet in the southern region of the state.

Each participating district will work with ALSDE to select the participating schools for each year on a phase-in basis, as a phase-in approach allows for more leaders and educators to develop and implement their collective leadership, pathways, and support structures, creating a growing network of support within each district. Each district will separate its pilot schools into phases, with up to five schools in each phase. By the end of Year 3, between 40-60 schools will participate in the pilot depending on the districts selected.

Diversity and equity of participating districts and schools is another priority of the TQ² Roundtable. The members insist that district participation include an ample number of public school districts embodying diverse representations of demography (student and teacher socio-economic level, race and ethnicity), geography (rural, suburban and urban), grade level (elementary, middle and high), performance (low-, middle- and high-performing schools), size (small, medium and large student populations), and financial designation (Title I and II schools).

Several important foci for the pilot include testing and assessment strategies that are successful in majority-minority school populations and schools with high instructional staff turnover rates. In addition, the pilot should explore whether aspects of the model assist in increasing the diversity of the teaching and administrative workforce — a key strategy in raising student growth rates for all races and ethnicities, but especially for students of color.

Pilot Timeline

Year Zero: Pilot Preparation

Prior to the launch of the pilot, ALSDE and other state partners will need to complete the following:

- Establish a working process with the selected external specialist, including details of the direct district supports for the first two years and the shadowing process for state scaling
- Establish working agreements with the partner universities and other state or local advocates assisting with various pilot district supports
- Develop the school district application process
- Determine data collection needs and processes for oversight and monitoring of the participating districts
- Share the details of the pilot opportunity with school districts around the state and open the pilot application process
- Select the districts to participate and sign necessary memoranda of agreement

Year 1: Design Year for Phase I Schools

The first year of the pilot is the design year for the (up to six) participating districts, Phase I schools and appropriate higher education partners. District leaders in the small and large cohorts will meet together in person or online in their respective cohort groups to learn the details of the flexible collective leadership model, begin designing their own specific parameters for their schools, and work with the external specialist and ALSDE to follow pilot monitoring procedures.

During the design year the external specialist, with ALSDE support, will bring together the district and school leaders and educator preparation faculty at various times, in a central location, to complete several design activities detailed in the table.

Sample Design Year Timeline	
Months	Activity
August - September	Information Sharing and Planning
October - February	Design Phase: Design Sessions with District Design Team Design Sessions with School Design Teams Educator Preparation Involvement
March - May	Educator Recruitment and Selection
Summer	Training for lead educators

Information Sharing and Planning

External specialist staff will work closely with the district design leaders to ensure that principals **and other district leaders understand the flexible model concepts and design process.**

District Design Assistance

External specialist staff will facilitate a series of sessions to guide the teams of district leaders in establishing model parameters and processes and to provide tools to aid flexible decision making, review lessons learned and examples from other sites, and provide analysis and recommendations based on local context. The district design process steps include:

- Roles and stipends
- School and residency design parameters
- Teacher selection criteria
- Teacher and candidate recruitment
- Evaluation
- Accountability
- Approval of school plans

School Design Assistance

External specialist staff will facilitate a series of sessions to help the school design teams clarify their goals for the flexible model and construct school plans and schedules to meet those objectives. This work includes financial analyses to ensure that school plans are sustainably designed within current budgets. The individual school design process steps include:

- Staffing plan
- Financial sustainability
- Scheduling
- Plan for hiring
- Present school plans to district leadership
- Prepare for implementation

Educator Preparation Involvement

External specialist staff will help the local higher education preparation providers to include teacher residency in the flexible collective leadership models. The educator preparation parameters and decisions include grade level and subject area selection; screening criteria and processes; and scheduling for availability to work in schools either four full days or three full and two half days per week.

Year 2: Begin Model Implementation and Monitoring for Phase I Schools

External specialist staff will assist Phase I schools with their first year of collaboratively implementing their own district- and school-based designs, finalized in Year 1. Three-day trainings for educators will be completed prior to the school year starting and external specialist staff will support the Phase I schools with in-person or virtual site visits, training supports, coaching sessions, and outcomes assessments.

Year 3: Continuous Model Implementation and Monitoring for Phase I Schools; Design Year for Phase II Schools

Year 3 will largely be a repeat of Year 2 for Phase I schools as they enter their second year of implementation. However, the state-level team will take over for the external specialist in supporting these districts with a lighter touch.

Each participating district with more than five schools will select another set of up to five schools to design their model based on the districts' parameters. These schools will be Phase II schools. The state-level support team will assist Phase II schools with their design year in the same manner as outlined above. The school design teams will meet with the other Phase II schools in their Small or Large Design Cohorts and begin learning about the flexible collective leadership model and their district's model parameters, and work to design their school parameters. The state-level support team will conduct similar work sessions and trainings for these schools as the external specialist did for Phase I.

Higher Education Partnerships

To provide candidates and training in both the pathways and advanced roles, it is essential for schools and districts to partner with institutions of higher education that are committed to innovation. The TQ² Roundtable recommends that both the Large and Small Design Cohorts partner with at least one local two- and four-year college. Their role will be to assist with creating a pipeline of potential teacher residents, as well as supportive training, micro-credentials, and teacher preparation resources to support advanced teachers and the collective leadership approach. ALSDE and ACHE should assist in facilitating these college-district partnerships in Years Zero and 1. Partnerships with willing and committed historically black colleges and universities are highly encouraged to assist in the goal of diversifying the teacher workforce of the future.

Participating colleges and universities must be willing to:

- Produce a pool of teacher candidate residents ready and able to work in schools for a year-long residency (at least 4 days per week for an entire school year)
- Use competency-based screening to assess teacher candidates for readiness prior to their student teaching residency in pilot schools
- Demonstrate the capacity and commitment to participate in design sessions, refine procedures and processes, and implement programmatic revisions to meet the needs of implementation in partner pilot districts' schools (i.e. revise mentor selection criteria, include pilot schools as resident placement sites, adjust coursework schedules to meet the needs of residency candidate structures and processes, etc.)
- Potentially collaborate with ALSDE or vendor(s) in developing micro-credentials to help train and assess the pilot advanced-role teachers

Innovating with Micro-Credentialing

Innovation is required for Alabama to enact a robust pilot such as this. All partners must be willing and committed to innovate in many ways. One way is micro-credentialing as a tool for training, professional development, and proof of competencies — if the micro-credentials are of high value for both teacher and employer. Alabama has already been working on micro-credentialing in higher education for many years related to multiple professions and is moving toward using it more in education and teacher preparation in the future.

ALSDE has explored micro-credentials as a structure to increase the use of evidence-based professional learning, best practices for adult learning, and domain-specific learning, and as a foundation of content knowledge. Specifically, the micro-credential cycle-of-inquiry learning framework will provide Alabama educators with job-embedded professional learning, followed with specific feedback, and will serve as the method to measure impact in the classrooms. Additionally, ALSDE wants to investigate how micro-credentials can serve as a conduit with IHE to provide a specific skill or knowledge set needed in “hard to find” teaching areas (gifted, EL, CS, etc.), fulfilling an “endorsement” format while also providing the opportunity to complete a degree. The flexibility that micro-credentials offer will provide districts across the state with a competency-based tool that can be tailored to fit the diverse demands of recruiting future educators, training new educators, and additional specialized training for veteran educators who may want to explore other educational fields.

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education envisions that the use of micro-credentials alongside certificates of value involves mastery of a job-specific set of skill building activities which includes work-based learning options. ACHE is in partnership with several government agencies, and the 2-year and 4-year institutions are moving toward aligning university course work with the world of work. A primary tool for this will be using stackable micro-credentials and certificates of value as part of a career pathway which leads to a postsecondary degree enhanced by work-based learning experiences, apprenticeships, internships, and residency experiences.

Micro-credentials can be developed and tested within this pilot in two ways:

- Pathways — the state can continue to move toward stackable micro-credentials by working with pilot partners to develop and test introductory credentials for college students selected to fill the apprentice teacher or teacher resident roles in participating schools. These micro-credentials should give the candidates basic skills for the co-teaching or teacher assistant role and should be designed to count toward their bachelor's degree.
- Advanced teaching roles — while the external specialist will be helpful in determining best practices for selecting or even hiring advanced teachers in the pilot districts, these teachers will need to further develop and hone their skills in mentoring adult colleagues. Micro-credentials can be used to provide this training and competency assessments to advanced-role teachers.

Participating higher education institutions should be an integral partner in the development of these micro-credentials, in addition to other appropriate state partners.

Pilot Evaluation and Results

ALSDE, with guidance from the external specialist and other potential partners, in partnership with the selected pilot districts and schools, will conduct (or oversee an external review of) an annual analysis of the teacher and student outcomes based on the implementation of the individually designed school models. A Year 1 analysis will collect information to serve as a baseline year for comparison before implementation. One or more non-pilot schools should be included in the analysis collecting the same data as a control group. The following should be collected for this analysis, though additional data points might be added:

- An overview of each participating district's design model
- District staff surveys in participating pilot districts
- School staff surveys in participating pilot schools
- Teacher observation results of all staff within a participating district (including schools not participating in the pilot for comparison)
- Teacher Professional Growth Plans for staff in participating schools
- Student growth data from all schools within a participating district (including schools not participating in the pilot for comparison)

ALSDE will be responsible for sharing an annual report at the end of pilot Year 2 and Year 3, compiled by either the agency or an external reviewer, summarizing the results of this data analysis with the Alabama State Legislature, Governor's office, Alabama State Board of Education and the general public. Only de-identified, aggregated data can be made public. This report should highlight the successes, challenges, and efficacy of the three main goals tested:

1. New pathways into the teaching profession, including teacher residents
2. Early-career support structures including co-teaching, mentorship, and professional development plans

3. Multiple advanced roles for highly effective and skilled teachers — including selecting, training and compensating these roles — to create flexible collective leadership models that bolster the early career supports and professional growth focus of goals one and two.

The TQ² Roundtable recommends that ALSDE and/or an external reviewer also coordinate with other districts and partner universities who may be running complementary pilots to collect and analyze their results. Reviewing all efforts around the state will provide a more robust analysis. Local efforts may help to inform the success rate of common strategies across projects and help to identify other promising practices not tested in the state pilot.

To properly compare different efforts around the state, it is important to collect similar data points (e.g., student growth, effectiveness rating, surveys with identical survey questions) from each participating district and school. As a control, similar data should also be collected from a non-pilot district for proper statistical meta-analysis.

Statewide Scaling and Sustainability

ALSDE, the newly established state-level support team, and all relevant pilot partners should identify a scaling and sustainability plan early on, should the pilot be deemed successful. This plan will rely heavily on those identified as responsible for shadowing and working with an external specialist from the outset, replicating their services by creating a quality Alabama model, training process and supports for working with the remaining 130+ districts in the state. The state-level support team will need to work closely with an external specialist and the pilot schools throughout the pilot and be ready to begin supporting additional districts and schools in Year 3 and after the pilot concludes. When implementing statewide, districts should typically begin design in a small number of schools, adding more each year (see Appendix E). External or state-provided technical assistance should continue until each district reaches 75% implementation, with support being tapered yearly as the district develops the structures and capacity to lead school design work and professional learning for advanced role teachers.

Once the three-year pilot concludes and a thorough examination of the results has been shared, education leaders and policymakers should come together to determine which aspects of the pilot, and the tiered model for teacher licensure, can and should be scaled statewide. If any continued partnership with the external specialist is desired, state leaders will need to assess the ability to continue funding district or regional cohort design trainings through state appropriations, grant funds or reallocation of federal funds. The legislature will need to outline the details of the post-pilot teacher salary allocations to all districts or determine a new, holistic structure and calculation process within the Foundation Program (see Funding section). No matter the legislature's decision on how to allocate necessary funds to districts for salaries, once all districts have undergone at least two years of design trainings and flexible budgeting changes a sustainable model of funding will have been established in each district.

Additional Recommendations to Improve the Quantity and Quality of the Teacher Workforce

Several general recommendations surfaced while examining the many related challenges and priorities. The TQ² Roundtable offers the following recommendations and urges the cooperation of multiple offices, agencies, and policymakers to see them to fruition.

Data Integration

1. The TQ² Roundtable will collaborate with all relevant state agencies during the development and **implementation of Alabama's statewide longitudinal data system, known as the Alabama Terminal for Linking and Analyzing Statistics (ATLAS) on Career Pathways**. The ATLAS on Career Pathways will become operational in the summer of 2021 and will build Alabama's capacity to collect, analyze, report, share, and link education and workforce data. This data system is of the utmost importance, providing multiple government offices, higher education institutions and state public school educators with the information needed to understand the challenges and successes of the state's education system from early learning through employment. Without clear data and information to correctly identify challenges and gaps in education, targeted solutions are much harder to ascertain and execute.

The ATLAS on Career Pathways should be linked to the following current and future databases:

- i. The Alabama Credential Registry and the competency models developed by the Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathways designed to identify in-demand career pathways and credentials of value
 - ii. PowerSchool SIS, or student information system, which manages student information and is used by educators, students, and parents to increase engagement, simplify reporting, and drive student growth
 - iii. Any future educator evaluation data management system
 - iv. The Alabama State Department of Education's learning management system (LMS), as well as the LMSs of other relevant state agencies
2. As a member of the TQ² roundtable, the Governor's Office of Education and Workforce Transformation will collaborate with the Alabama Department of Labor to **produce an analysis of the economic impact of teaching**. Teaching needs to be identified and reported as an important component of the economic growth strategy. This analysis will provide invaluable information regarding the supply and demand, as well as contributions of the teacher workforce to the state's economy. Furthermore, this analysis will shine a light on the ripple effects of the teacher workforce on other industries and the general state economy and help to raise the esteem of the profession overall.

Expanding Non-Traditional Pathways

3. In order for Alabama to better facilitate these collaborative K-12 and higher education partnerships, the TQ² Roundtable recommends that state leaders **amend the Alabama Administrative Code 290-3-3-.02 (a) to remove the restrictions that prevent state educator preparation programs from accepting introductory teaching courses from state community colleges.** This unnecessary restriction causes students to have to repeat these courses once accepted into a university, increasing their education costs and discouraging future teachers.
4. Furthermore, the TQ² Roundtable recommends **creating specialized associate degrees over offering only transfer degrees in general studies.** This would allow the state's community colleges to align associate degrees with specific professions, majors, or courses of study. The Alabama Commission on Higher Education supports this change. It would also present an opportunity for Alabama to pursue creating a 2+2 teaching degree pathway with community colleges and 4-year colleges.
5. In addition, the TQ² Roundtable recommends the Alabama Commission of Higher Education and the Alabama Community College System **establish a working group of community college leaders and university leaders to work toward creating a 2+2 teaching degree pathway and necessary articulation agreements.** This new degree pathway will firmly establish a low-cost degree option for future teachers and further increase the opportunity to recruit more diverse candidates and rural students.

North Carolina's Community College System recently created a 2+2 teaching degree pathway, and many of their colleges have entered into articulation agreements with public and private universities. Furthermore, the community college system has been approved to go one step further and offer teaching bachelor's degrees at certain campuses. Alabama leaders could consult North Carolina leaders for advice.

6. The TQ² Roundtable recommends that the Alabama General Studies Committee (AGSC), which oversees the STARS system, **create a broader and deeper awareness of transfer articulations,** allowing teacher candidates to receive two years of their degree requirements at community colleges and transfer to finish their degree requirements at a state four-year institution. STARS, or the Statewide Transfer & Articulation Reporting System, is a computerized articulation and transfer planning system designed to inform students who attend Alabama community colleges about degree requirements, course equivalents, and other transfer information pertaining to specific majors at each state-funded four-year institution.
7. Finally, the TQ² Roundtable recommends that all appropriate state agencies and boards coordinate with the Governor's Office of Education and Workforce Transformation to **explore creating a state-level, fully funded co-operative or apprenticeship program for K-12 teachers.** This program would combine academic coursework and skilled on-the-job training to better recruit and prepare future teachers. The program could

build on the successful strategies identified in the Teacher Pathways, Support and Advancement Pilot related to college students becoming full-time (four days per week) paid teacher assistants (referred in the pilot as teacher residents) while continuing to complete their final two years of required coursework at their college or university. Additionally, the program can be modeled in part around the apprentice program for early childhood education.

The TQ² Roundtable previously recommended removing restrictions for four-year institutions to accept teacher preparation courses taken at state community colleges and create specialized associate degrees in education and/or content subject matter. If the state is successful with this rule change, students completing these associate degrees will be prime candidates for the state co-op or apprenticeship program. In addition, this provides a reduction in the costs of a teaching degree.

This program will be a new opportunity to expand the focus on “growing your own” teachers for rural and hard-to-staff areas of the state. It is also a strategy to attract a more diverse group of students and provide them hands-on exposure in the field of teaching. Offering paid apprenticeship roles and reduced college costs provides a great incentive for low-income young adults to consider the teaching profession.

Call to Action

It is imperative that Alabama shift investments to supporting, training, and retaining our teachers. Teaching is among the essential professions in any civilized society, arguably the one that makes all others possible. Teaching is a human endeavor, and all humans need encouragement and opportunities to grow their talents in preparing the next generation.

The TQ² Roundtable believes in the potential benefits of this pilot initiative: to attract new teachers into the profession and give them hands-on experience, provide better support for early-career and struggling teachers, and raise the retention rate of excellent teachers — who will have the opportunity to advance in the profession as master and lead educators, leading teams of teachers in instructional growth and fostering substantial gains in student achievement. We urge state policymakers and educators to support this important trial of teacher pathways, support, and advancement, and to scale the identified successful strategies for recruiting and retaining a quality teacher workforce throughout all the districts in our state.

Appendix A

Teacher Quantity and Quality Roundtable Members

A+ Education Partnership — **Mr. Mark Dixon**

Alabama State Department of Education — **Dr. Jeff Langham, Dr. Jayne Meyer** and

Ms. Shavon Cummings

Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education — **Dr. Tracye Strichik** on behalf of

Mrs. Jeana Ross and **Dr. Bonnie Sullivan** on behalf of Dr. Barbara Cooper

Alabama Education Association — **Ms. Amy Marlowe** and **Ms. Ashley McClain**

Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools — **Dr. Vic Wilson**

School Superintendents of Alabama — **Mr. Ryan Hollingsworth**

Alabama Association of School Boards — **Ms. Sally Smith**

Alabama Commission on Higher Education — **Dr. Robin McGill** and **Dr. Michael Walker-Jones**
on behalf of Dr. Jim Purcell

Education Policy Adviser to the Governor — **Mr. Nick Moore** and **Mr. Jake Easter**

Chair, House Education Policy Committee — **Representative Terri Collins**

Alabama Community College System — **Dr. Chris Cox**

Deans of Colleges of Education:

Alabama State University — **Dr. Alethea Hampton**

University of South Alabama — **Dr. Andrea “Andi” Kent**

Samford University — **Dr. Anna McEwan**

SREB Support Staff (in alphabetical order) — **Megan Boren, Stevie Lawrence, Stephen Pruitt, Jessica Snellings**

Appendix B

Glossary of Terms

Full-Year Teacher Residents — teacher candidates who receive on-the-job-learning while completing a degree and meet one of two descriptions:

- obtained at least an associate degree or 60+ hours of college credit and are currently enrolled in a traditional or alternative teacher preparation program
- enrolled in their final year of an educator preparation program (bachelor’s or master’s) needing to fulfill their program’s student teaching requirement

Master teachers — teachers demonstrating increased effectiveness who would thrive in stretching their reach to teach more students directly.

Lead teachers (of multiple classrooms) — teachers demonstrating high effectiveness and adult coaching competencies who would thrive in: leading, co-planning, and analyzing data for a teaching team; observing, giving feedback, and coaching team teachers; co-teaching and modeling for team teachers; and continuing to teach some portion of the time.

External specialist — an experienced vendor who offers successful, comprehensive strategies for testing out the three main pilot goals tested in multiple states and districts.

State-level sustainable support team — a permanent support team led by a state-employed director overseeing not only the management of the pilot and analysis, but also a team of support staff with enough capacity to directly support the design and implementation of the model in districts and schools statewide. The team will shadow the external specialist for the first two years to learn how to support districts and schools for future scaling.

Appendix C

Educator Certification in Alabama as of 2019-2020

The State Board of Education approved changes to the rules governing educator certification, effective September 2017. This section describes state requirements for professional, provisional, and career-technical certificates. Chapter 290-3-2 addresses certification rules for all applicants, regardless of the preparation route.

The State Board of Education delegates the authority to issue certificates to the Education Certification Section of the Alabama State Department of Education. All applicants for certification must complete a criminal background check, prove their citizenship status, and pass state-required licensure assessments.

The Alabama Educator Certification Assessment Program includes three components:

- *Basic Skills* — Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators assessments, effective September 2017
- *Subject Assessments* — Praxis Subject Assessments (Praxis II), effective April 2005
- *Practice-Based Assessment* — Pearson edTPA®, effective September 2018

Professional Educator Certification

State rules require applicants for professional educator certificates to hold an earned bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution and complete the requirements of the state's certification assessment program. Graduates of non-regionally accredited institutions must complete a state-approved teacher education program, produce a valid, out-of-state teaching certificate, and earn nine semester hours of graduate credit from a state-approved program located in Alabama.

Professional educator and leadership certificates are valid for five years from the issuing date. Teachers may renew a professional educator certificate in one of six ways:

1. Three years of experience and fifty clock hours of professional development
2. Three years of experience and three semester hours of university credit
3. Fifty clock hours and three semester hours of university credit
4. Six semester hours of university credit
5. One hundred clock hours of professional development credit
6. National Board Certification

Provisional and Emergency Certification

The Alabama State Department of Education issues provisional certificates in a teaching field for candidates working full-time in a school district. State regulation authorizes school principals or district superintendents to request provisional certificates on behalf of hired employees. Teachers completing provisional certification requirements may apply for a bachelor's level professional educator certificate.

License holders must complete three years of full-time classroom experience over a four-year period and in no more than two school systems to apply for the professional educator certificate.

To receive the first provisional certificate, current applicants must hold an earned bachelor's degree with a grade-point average of 2.75 or higher and document passing scores on the basic skills assessments and the Praxis II test(s) for the teaching field. For teaching fields with no Praxis II test, applicants must verify that their earned degree is in an academic major aligned with the teaching field or that the degree included at least 32 semester hours (19 upper-division credits) related to the teaching field. Districts must assign mentors to provisional teachers.

For the second and third years, the principal or district superintendent must recommend teachers for continued certification under the provisional approach. Teachers must submit verification of one year of classroom experience and an official transcript showing completion of two university courses each in years one and two. The university courses must cover the following topics: classroom management, evaluation of teaching and learning, methods of teaching, and strategies for teaching special-needs students. To receive a third year under the provisional certificate, teachers must submit passing scores for the relevant Praxis Principles of Learning and Teaching test.

The department issues Interim Employment Certificates for candidates enrolled in Alternative Class A programs. As with provisional certificates, interim credentials require district sponsorship and completion of the basic skills and Praxis II requirements. Candidates must retain district sponsorship and the preparation program's recommendation to receive second and third interim certificates. After completing an Alternative Class A program and documenting three years of experience, individuals may apply for a professional educator certificate.

District leaders may request that the department issue Emergency Certificates when they cannot find a highly qualified educator. Applicants must hold a bachelor's degree. Currently, the emergency certificate is valid for only one year and in only one teaching field or area of instructional support. However, Alabama House Bill 506 will require the State Board to extend the validity of emergency teaching certificates from one to two years and allow local education agencies to apply for an extension that would allow teachers to practice under emergency certificates for a total of four years.

Career and Technical Education Certification

The Alabama State Department of Education issues provisional certificates for candidates in a career-technical field. School principals or district superintendents request a provisional certificate on behalf of a hired employee. The completion of provisional certification requirements allows candidates to earn a bachelor's level professional educator certificate. The initial degree,

GPA, and state licensure testing requirements are the same for academic and technical candidates with one exception: applicants for some technical fields must document proficiency through a test score, license, or industry-recognized credential. To retain certification, candidates must receive an administrative recommendation, complete four university courses, and document classroom experience over the three-year validity of the certificate.

Certification for Out-of-State Teachers

To qualify for a professional educator certificate, out-of-state applicants must hold a bachelor's degree, a valid out-of-state license, and passing scores on licensure assessments. Out-of-state applicants may satisfy Alabama's licensure assessment requirements in one of three ways: (1) verification of a passing score on the content knowledge test required in another state, (2) proof of at least three years of experience, or (3) meeting the current state content knowledge test requirements.

Source: Alabama State Department of Education website and State Legislation or Rule

Appendix D

Micro-Credentials and Certificates of Value at ACHE

At the Alabama Commission on Higher Education we envision that the use of micro-credentials alongside certificates of value involves mastery of a job-specific set of skill-building activities including work-based learning options.

ACHE is in partnership with several government agencies and our 2-year and 4-year institutions are moving toward developing an alignment of university course work with the world of work. A primary method in this endeavor will be using stackable micro-credentials and certificates of value as part of a career pathway which leads a citizen to postsecondary degree attainment enhanced by work-based learning experiences, apprenticeships, internships, and residency experiences.

In May 2018, Alabama's cross-sector Educational Attainment Committee released its recommendations for reaching the goal as a comprehensive strategic plan entitled "Success Plus." The plan reviews the skilled workforce landscape in Alabama and identifies core priorities and objectives for reaching the attainment goal: increasing awareness, supporting access and success, creating well-defined pathways, expanding leadership and collaboration, and tracking progress. In addition, a number of regional initiatives are underway that support progress toward attainment, including Mobile's Talent Hub and Birmingham's Bold Goals Coalition. Increasing the "Quantity and Quality" of our P-K-12 teacher workforce should be part of the scope of this effort.

Alabama is engaged in a state-wide, cross-sector effort to establish the Alabama Compendium of Valuable Credentials, with the goal of expanding the number and quality of credential opportunities that lead to middle-skill careers.

Under the leadership of Governor Kay Ivey, Alabama has set the ambitious attainment goal of adding an additional 500,000 credentialed Alabamians to the labor force over the next six years.

Reaching the Alabama attainment goals will require continued broad-based buy-in and concerted effort at systems change. In December 2018, the Governor’s Office of Education and Workforce Transformation (GOEWT) was established and tasked with strategically aligning stakeholder efforts and funding streams around the state’s attainment and labor force participation goals.

Appendix E

Sample Scaling

Sample Phase-In to Achieve 100% Statewide Implementation

District Size	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Yr 6	Yr 7+
Small Districts (1-19 schools)	1-5	10	All remaining				
Medium Districts (20-50 schools)	8	15	20	20	All remaining		
Large Districts (51+ schools)	10	15	30	30	30	30	All remaining

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