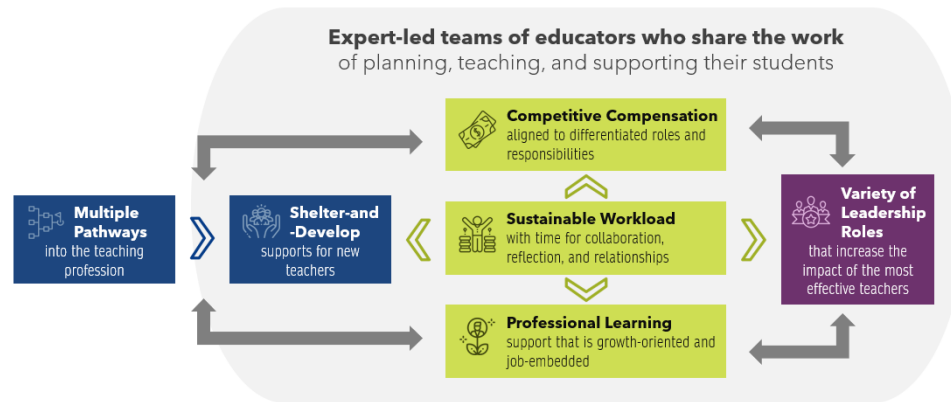




# Examples from the Field

## Whittier Elementary School in Mesa, AZ



In 2020, Whittier Elementary School in Mesa, AZ shifted to a new model that leverages teams of educators to provide deeper, personalized learning for students. Students in grades 4 through 6 are organized into multi-age “houses” of about 85 students each. Each house is led by a core educator team consisting of a lead teacher, certified teachers, and teacher residents, and is supported by instructional assistants and community educators. Educator teams share the same roster of students; share the planning, with different team members leading planning in each content area; and share instructional delivery. Educators collaborate and co-plan within and across house teams. This team-based model enables educators to provide more personalized learning while also increasing the sustainability of workloads.

This model involves shifts to people, time, and money, such as for:

- **Collaboration time:** Teams of educators meet daily for co-creating and co-planning while students are at specials, lunch, and recess. During this time one teacher from the core educator team will lead in each content area.
- **Teacher leader compensation:** Each core educator team is led by a lead teacher who owns curriculum design and helps determine the arrangement of educators across students, while still directly working with students. This position is provided with additional compensation for their responsibilities.
- **Teacher residents:** There may be additional costs associated with the recruitment and development of teacher residents who need training to support the classroom.

To learn more about Whittier’s team-based approach and view artifacts such as schedules, visit the [School Spotlight on Whittier Elementary](#) and the rest of the [School Spotlights](#) from the Next Education Workforce Initiative at Arizona State University’s Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College.