

A grayscale photograph of a teacher and two students looking at a microscope. The teacher is on the left, smiling, and the students are on the right, looking intently at the microscope.

Catalytic Entry Points in Action

Diversify and Expand the Incoming Teaching Force

Challenge

District A has historically struggled with teacher turnover and vacancies in math, science, and special education, causing leaders to staff many classrooms with long-term substitutes and novice teachers who lack support and training. Many of these novices quickly burn out, move to other districts, or leave the profession entirely, perpetuating the turnover cycle. Experienced teachers have limited opportunities for career growth, beyond leaving the classroom to pursue instructional coach and school leadership roles. District A teachers also struggle to provide the level of small-group time and attention that their students need.

Additionally, District A's teaching force is 80% white, while more than 90% of the district's students identify as Black or Latinx, and 70% qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. In contrast to the teaching force, the district's paraprofessionals and teaching assistants reflect the racial diversity of District A's student body.



“Build Toward” Vision

District A’s leaders want to ensure that teaching teams:

- **Deliver high-quality instruction** and remain in their positions long-term.
- **Address the academic and social-emotional needs** of all students.
- **Reflect the student body’s socioeconomic diversity.**
- **Include a variety of roles** that create a breadth of career paths and flexibility.

And that the district has a sufficient supply of well-prepared teachers who:

- **Experience intensively supported, pre-service clinical practice**, with significant time to co-plan and co-teach alongside an experienced teacher leader.
- **Come to the district from an array of sources**, freeing the district from relying on a single program.
- **Pursue teacher certification** with little to no financial burden.

“Do Now” Strategy

To **improve and diversify the teacher pipeline** in several middle schools, District A’s leaders are partnering with a local teacher education program to co-create an expert-supported [teacher residency model](#) that will:

- **Enable pre-service candidates to gain practical teaching experience**, complete their educator preparation program, and provide instructional support in priority subject areas—without having to work second and third jobs to make ends meet.
- **Create career paths for current paraprofessional staff**, who better reflect student demographics than current teaching staff and offer a new source of future teaching talent for the district.
- **Offer full-time teaching positions**—ideally in their pre-service placement schools—and transition support to pre-service teachers who successfully complete their residency year.



Resource Shifts

Participating in this partnership program, Middle School A serves 570 students in grades 6-8. The school has had persistent vacancies in math, science, and special education, with little to no student improvement in these areas over the past five years.

To solve these challenges and offset costs, Middle School A's leaders will take the following steps:

- **Hire three pre-service residents**, each with a **\$25,000** stipend,¹ to support math, science, and special education.
- **Pair residents with experienced teachers** who have the same joint-planning periods and schedules, which include:
 - Time for residents to observe teacher leader and other teachers in the classroom.
 - Time for teacher leaders to observe residents in the classroom and provide feedback.
 - Instruction for small groups of students from multiple classrooms.
 - Content team and grade-level collaborative planning time.
 - Sharing arrival, dismissal, and lunch duties with other residents, freeing up time for reflection and planning.
 - Attending classes and completing coursework for their educator preparation programs.

	3 Days a Week	2 Days a Week
Period	Check-In with Lead Teacher	Arrival Duty
1	Math: Observe Lead Teacher	Math: Observe Lead Teacher
2	Math: Co-Teach	Math: Co-Teach
3	Math: Lead Instruction (Lead Teacher Observes)	Math: Lead Instruction (Lead Teacher Observes)
	Duty-Free Lunch	
4	Planning with Lead Teacher	6 th Grade Team Collaboration
5	ELA: Small Group Support	½ Day Release for Classes
6	ELA: Small Group Support	
	Dismissal Duty	

- **Identify and support teacher leaders**, providing them each with a **\$3,000** stipend, to engage residents in a “gradual release” model, where teacher leaders give feedback and support that enables residents to slowly take on more instructional responsibility.
- **Schedule and protect joint-planning time** so that resident-teacher pairs can effectively collaborate, share feedback, and plan together.

¹ For this and every other stipend the school or district offers, leaders would also need to account for the cost of payroll tax and retirement contributions associated with the stipend, which typically ranges from 10-20% of pay.



Resource Shifts in Action

Stipends for three pre-service teachers and three teacher leaders will cost the school **\$84,000**. With budget flexibility, creativity, and support from district partners, Middle School A's principal found resources for this investment by:

- **Strategically increasing class sizes** in electives to free up the equivalent of one FTE, or **\$82,000**. Since elective classes previously averaged 24 students, increasing their size to 28 enabled the school to reduce the number of full-time elective teaching positions from eight to seven.
- **Reducing investments in one-off professional development workshops** or national conference attendance, saving them **\$2,000**.

Total Investments	Total Trade-Offs	Net Budget Impact
Pre-Service Stipends \$25,000 x 3 candidates = \$75,000	Increase Class Size in electives from 24 to 28, which reduces the need for 1 electives teacher and frees up \$82,000	Budget-Neutral Investment
Teacher Leader Stipends (including benefits) \$3,000 x 3 teacher leaders = \$9,000	Other Reduced Investments External one-off professional development workshops and associated travel = \$2,000	
Total: \$84,000	Total: \$84,000	

The District's Role

District A's leaders plan to scale the model so at least 30% of new teachers are trained through the pre-service residency program. To achieve that scale and retain teachers long-term, the leaders need to:

- **Subsidize the cost of coursework and certification**, which might add up to **\$30,000** per resident, or 0.3% of a typical district's operating budget. The district could offset this cost by filling vacant positions with two teacher residents who are assigned to teams with a multi-classroom leader.
- **Create financial incentives** to encourage teachers to stay in placement or high-need schools. For example, providing \$4,000 stipends to teachers who have completed a residency program and remain in their placement school for two years could cost 0.04% of total budget.
- **Coordinate with higher-education partners** by adding two HR staff to each support 50 residents. Two full-time coordinator hires amount to 0.02% of a typical district's operating budget, but the amount of support required depends on district need and partner landscape.

To sustain and deepen change, district leaders can:

- **Codify, refine, and expand teacher leadership roles** for both rookie support and broader instructional impact.
- **Develop a strategic compensation model** that codifies pay for pre-service teachers and higher pay increases for teacher leaders as part of the career path.
- **Differentiate roles and responsibilities** for rookies, experienced teachers, and teacher leaders through adjustments to class size and student assignment.