**Recruitment and Retention of teachers in rural school Districts**

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Research has found consistent staffing problems in rural schools, including a persistent gap between the qualifications of teachers in rural and urban schools. Rural communities face limitations in recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers for reasons such as: funding issues, limited teacher supply, lack of access to rigorous training and certification options due to geographic and social isolation. Carolina TIP (Teacher Induction Program) has a 100% retention rate through one-on-one coaching/mentoring.

30 SC districts were eligible to participate in the state’s Rural Recruitment Initiative during the 2017-18 school year, FY18 Proviso 1A.59. All 30 districts requested funds for teacher recruitment and/or retention incentives during FY18; 17 of them reported fewer teachers leaving and/or fewer vacant teacher positions compared to the previous year.

* Additional funds need to be directed to specific strategies to support recruitment and retention efforts in “rural” districts. All districts that receive funds should be designated “rural” according to federal guidelines. Current funding levels and programming should be maintained since data show positive trends.
* Create teacher villages to assist with lowering the cost of living expenses and combat feelings of isolation. Combined with loan forgiveness and lower monthly rent ($300 average) would incentivize 20% of teachers new to the field to work in rural areas.
* Work with builders and homeowners to provide tax credits for reduced rent for teachers.
* Teacher Fellows Program expanded to include free college tuition once a high school student commits to teaching in his/her rural hometown upon graduation. (Loan Forgiveness)
* Partner with IHE’s to increase/expand/create research-based administrator pipelines to increase the quality of school leadership in rural areas.
* Include behavior Event Interviews for master teachers and school leaders.
* Increase salaries for teachers by $5000 to work in rural schools. Work with Gen Z as they want to celebrate diversity and co-create and are independent.
* Incentivize veteran teachers with track record (data) of success with rural, high poverty populations to work for 5 years in a rural low performing school.
* Work with IHE’s to fully fund internship opportunities for all disciplines to work and live in rural areas of the state. Classes and seminars can be completed online.
* Encourage districts to support new teachers by scaling Carolina Teacher Induction Program. Engage and fund pilots through Carolina Family Engagement Center to have “forced family fun.”
* Work with traditional and technical colleges to hire instructors to teach in middle and high schools and supplement salaries. (Virtual Learning)
* Build support for alternative routes to certification through IHE’s such as The Carolina Collaborative for Alternative Preparation.
* Increase funding for internship and practicum experiences to include stipends and travel reimbursement for preservice teachers.
* Develop a plan to market the advantages of working in rural schools.
* Create pilot projects to incentivize Colleges and Universities to partner with rural districts around the state for student internships (Link to Teacher Village and virtual classes).

**Improving Teacher Professional Development**

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Research shows that there are no standards defining quality professional development and that there are too few qualified providers. Without a shared and codified understanding of “quality” professional development, teachers are often subjected to mediocre, and in some cases, malign professional development that doesn’t help them and that in fact wastes their time and tax-payer money. (Here is an opportunity to build on successful models like Carolina TIP)

* Teachers who receive on-the-job support, guidance and feedback from a supervisor or a trained support person apply new skills and strategies more frequently and appropriately and adopt a more diverse range of instructional practices than teachers who do not receive such supports. (Scale up Carolina TIP)
* Researchers have studied individualized coaching programs for decades, but only began to evaluate their effects using randomized control trials in the last dozen years. Learning forward examines what this growing literature says about the efficacy of teacher coaching as a development tool. Does one-to-one coaching help teachers get better? If so, how powerful a strategy might this be to improve teacher practice and student outcomes? Request research be done to determine the effectiveness of teacher coaching in SC. (Carolina TIP)
* Invest in research (Qualitative) coaching models to support rural schools. (Carolina TIP)
* Learning Forward has also found from results from across 60 studies that coaching works. With coaching, the quality of teachers’ instruction improves by more than—the difference in effectiveness between a novice teacher and one with with 5 to 10 years.
* Larger coaching **programs** are less effective than smaller ones. (See Carolina TIP)
* Teachers in rural, high poverty and low performing schools need a focused and concentrated professional development plan.
* Develop, apply and measure standards for teacher professional development.
* Invest in professional development that increases teacher quality.
* Survey schools, districts and teachers in their first three years of teaching to understand the greatest areas of need by new or pre-service teachers. (Carolina TIP)
* Use professional development to build the capacity of instructional leadership in low performing and rural school systems.
* Require professional development of school board members in low performing rural systems that goes beyond boardmanship activities required to reach level 6.
* The most effective professional development engages teams of teachers to focus on the needs of their students. They learn and problem solve together in order to ensure all students achieve success.
* Educators’ collective growth has a greater impact on student learning across the school than individual learning does.
* Learning Forward “advocates that at least 25% of an educator’s work time be devoted to learning and collaboration with colleagues” (NSDC, 2001). Also, Learning Forward advocates that at least 30% of the technology budget be devoted to teacher development.
* Require districts to seamlessly connect professional development to academic goals.