

Strategies for Sustaining Innovative Pathways



Strategies for Sustaining Innovative Pathways – April 2023
Published by BranchED, Inc., 100 World Drive, Suite 101, Peachtree City, GA 30269.

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Introduction

Sustaining innovative pathways requires planning how to compensate candidates at the local level in the long term, or once grant funding is no longer available. This tool provides strategies and discussion questions that Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) and school district partners can consider to sustain innovative pathways over time, given their individual needs and contexts. It is important to note that the strategies provided here are not intended as a finite list. Districts and universities might imagine other possibilities that make sense for their innovative pathway programs.

Innovative Staffing Strategies

This set of strategies helps reimagine roles and responsibilities in the school that could be reserved for teacher candidates to earn pay while participating in an innovative pathway. Innovative staffing can offer financial benefits to the candidates participating in an innovative pathway program and meet the current needs of the school district in staffing of other areas. Additionally, for some of these strategies, the candidates will become employees for your school district, making them eligible for critical employee benefits.

| Strategy | Strategy Description |
|--|--|
| Candidates as Substitutes | Candidates serve as substitute teachers on given days and for a certain quantity of days, earn substitute teacher pay. |
| Candidates as Tutors | Candidates provide tutoring to students during or after school hours as part of the innovative pathway program and with additional pay. This can target a student achievement initiative at school (math, literacy, etc.). |
| Candidates as Teacher Assistants/Paraprofessionals | Candidates serve as teacher assistants or paraprofessionals on a part-time basis while they complete their innovative pathway program. (i.e., 1/2 day as a paraprofessional and 1/2 day as a candidate) |
| Candidates as Supervisors | Candidates are assigned certain paid supervision duties during the school day or before and after school (i.e., recess duty, crossing guard, lunchroom supervision etc.) |
| Candidates as Extended Day Personnel | Candidates become employees of the extended day program at the school and earn extra money in those roles. |

Finances

These strategies illustrate how a district can financially invest in the candidates during their participation in an innovative pathway program through direct payments, loans, or other financial long-term benefits.

| Strategy | Strategy Description |
|--|--|
| District-paid stipends | District considers cost-savings from the innovative program (i.e., recruitment funds) and reallocates that money to pay direct stipends to teacher candidates during their clinical year. |
| District Provided No Interest Loan | The district provides a no-interest loan to the candidates participating in an innovative pathway program that is repaid over time through salary deductions during the time they are required to teach in the district. |
| Earned Credit Toward Retirement System | The candidates participating in an innovative pathway program earn a year of credit toward retirement, resulting in long-term financial benefits. |
| 1-year Credit on Salary Scale | Upon hire as a teacher of record following their clinical year, graduates are placed on year 2 of the salary schedule, giving them credit for their clinical year and resulting in long-term financial benefits. |

Community Considerations

This set of strategies illustrates community support for innovative pathways. Prior to engaging in solicitation of these supports, it will be important for the partnership to design strong messaging about the benefits of innovative pathways to the school district community.

| Strategy | Strategy Description |
|---|--|
| Foundation Donations | Seek out local donations from community foundations or other local organizations that could be used to provide stipends to candidates participating in an innovative pathway program. |
| Housing Vouchers | Work with local governments or housing complexes to investigate if housing vouchers could be administered to candidates participating in an innovative pathway program in support of education in the community. |
| Gift Certificates from Local Businesses | Solicit gifts from local establishments directly or through the chamber of commerce that can be passed on to candidates participating in an innovative pathway program to help offset the cost of living during the clinical year. |

University Level Strategies

This set of strategies illustrates moves at the university level that can lower the cost of an innovative pathways program. These savings can then be passed on to the candidates participating in an innovative pathway program, lowering the cost to participate in the program.

| Strategy | Strategy Description |
|--|--|
| Cohort Models | Leverage a cohort model to plan for cost-efficient staffing and pass savings onto the candidates participating in an innovative pathway program through a tuition discount. |
| Collapse Coursework | Collapse coursework within the preparation program by seeking overlaps in coursework and what the candidates participating in an innovative pathway program will experience on-site at a school. One less course can result in significant savings for candidates. |
| Recycle Textbooks | Purchase a "class set" of textbooks that will be used by several cohorts at no-cost to the candidates participating in an innovative pathway program. By eliminating textbook costs, you pass along those savings to the candidates. |
| Utilize School District Employees as Adjuncts | Employ district teachers or administrators as adjuncts to teach the courses instead of full-time faculty. This can reduce costs to run the course and allow the adjunct to personalize the curriculum for the context of the school district. |
| Research, Promote, and Advise Candidates Participating in an Innovative Pathway Program on All Possible Sources of Financial Aid | Counsel the candidates participating in an innovative pathway program in all financial aid possibilities including scholarships, grants, and other forms of financial aid. |

Discussion

EPP and school district partnerships can use the questions below as they consider each of the above strategies.

1. Who benefits from this strategy? In what way?
2. Is this a feasible strategy for our innovative pathways program? What would need to happen to implement this strategy?
3. How quickly could this strategy be implemented?
4. What implications does this strategy have for others within the partnership? (i.e., teachers of record, school personnel, students, etc.)
5. If we were to implement this strategy, what would be our first next step?