

Education Sector

Summary of key themes, needs, and opportunities: June 2025

Prepared by the Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession (CSTP)

(1) What are the top 3-5 themes you hear from employers in your sector related to workforce development?

- Employers report immediate needs for educators across a few key role types and endorsements within the education sector, specifically for educators who identify as Black, Indigenous, or a Person of Color (BIPOC), those with Special Education endorsements, or with Dual Language endorsements. Because of the 2018 Washington State Inclusionary Practices Project (IPP) to increase student access to core instruction and general education settings, many more students with IEPs are now served in general education settings for 80% or more of the school day. This requires the teacher workforce to be trained to best support students with learning disabilities to meet their needs in an integrated learning environment. The core value of OSPI's commitment to equity led to an increased need for BIPOC educators as the overwhelming majority of the teacher population and administration is White, while the student population is over 50% students of color. The need for increased numbers in both the paraeducator role and substitute role is also a priority as it is one of the best methods for sourcing local talented educators from within the community and providing much-needed in-classroom support as classroom sizes have gotten larger.
- Employers also comment on the fact that there needs to be a gentle and caring handoff between stages of the journey for a prospective educator across the different pathways from recruitment to a program, completion of a certificate and or degree, to employment within a district and progression in their growth professional development. A key need is for better bridges between programs and working collaboratively. We've heard overwhelming feedback about how needed the Regional Gatherings have been. They present the space for the different entities that support educator recruitment, preparation, and retention in a region collaborating together to identify gaps in the journey, discuss funding opportunities, pathway exploration etc.

(2a) What are the 3-6 occupations that employers in your sector indicate should be high-priority for workforce development to help meet their hiring needs?

- SPED endorsed teachers
- Bilingual/MLL endorsed educators
- Thriving BIPOC educators
- Certificated paraeducators
- Certificated substitute teachers

(2b) Which career-connected learning programs are effectively meeting the hiring needs of employers in your sector?

- The Bridges Program of WSU Tri-Cities
- NAKIA Academy for BIPOC Mentors
- ESD-U is training and certificating SPED endorsed educators
- Seattle Teacher Residency and the WEA's residency program are doing the most in regard to

on-the-job training of teacher candidates

- Teaching Academies using the Recruit WA Teachers curriculum are building pathways for certification that could be expanded
- Puget Sound ESD's Para to Full cert pathway program is supporting Highline and local districts build out pathways for paraeducators of color to become fully certificated
- NWESDs Teachers for the People project to support Indigenous high school students into the classroom as educators.

(2c) Which career connected learning programs could be adjusted, expanded, or scaled to other regions to meet the hiring needs of employers in your sector?

There is a strong need to grow and diversify the pathways of WA educators entering the profession. Below is a list of programs that could be adjusted, scaled or expanded to meet those needs:

- The Nakia Academy for Mentors of Color
- Seattle Teacher Residency Program
- WEA's Registered Apprenticeship Residency Program
- Puget Sound ESD's Paraeducator to Full Cert Pathway for BIPOC Educators pathway (which could potentially specialize to other high needs endorsements (Dual language, SPED)
- Recruit WA teachers
- Teaching Academies that include para-certification
- Higher education institutions expanding their pathways to include residency models
- Expansion or revisioning of the Paraeducator registered Apprenticeship Program to be an Advanced Paraeducator Program that supports districts to train educators while earning a BA
- Selah school districts Career Launch program in ESD 105

(2d) Which career connected learning programs should be developed to meet the hiring needs of employers in your sector?

We recommend the following:

- Paraeducator to full certification pathways for high-needs endorsements and teacher demographics by region (SPED, Dual language, BIPOC)
- Replication and or expansion of the ESD-U model, especially in rural areas
- Additional residency or apprenticeship programs in higher education
- An integrated CE- CP- CL continuum in a region
- BIPOC professional development and leadership retention
- Paraeducator apprenticeship or residency models through districts with strong relationships with their local unions, teaching academies, and higher education institutions.

(3) What are the top three efforts, initiatives, or investments that could meaningfully support the workforce development needs of employers in your sector?

- The technical assistance that is required to implement regional and state-wide initiatives. While PESB or OSPI can legislate about inclusionary practices or requirements, those kinds of shifts require on the ground training and on-going support.
- Intentional convenings of system actors impacting educator pathways and opportunities.
- Training that supports a culture shift within the K-12 system to be culturally responsive, equity-driven, and promote a felt, supported, and accountable sense of belonging for all staff.

(4) What are the top 3-5 approaches you recommend to increase participation of underrepresented students in your sector's high priority occupations?

- Recruiting and retaining more educators of color to then become leaders of color in education spaces. We recommend prioritizing pathways for certification and professional development programming to support their needs to yield a better representation of the teacher workforce for students to see themselves in the profession. We also recommend funding programming that impacts the growth and development of mentors and leaders of color so that pre-service and early career teachers also have representation of longevity in their career and paths forward they can follow or expand.
- Increasing the number of pathways towards certification in more rural areas. We recommend supporting local grow-your-own efforts that can offer courses and training opportunities at local high schools or districts to better recruit local talent to learn and then teach in their communities.
- More intentional community and coalition building among educational stakeholders in the region to better address gaps and plan for future opportunities that directly impact underrepresented groups.