

Grow Your Own: From Apprentice to High-Quality Educator

6 WAYS TO SUPPORT TEACHER APPRENTICE SUCCESS

Across the country, districts in all 50 states are launching “Grow Your Own” (GYO) or apprenticeship programs to address teacher shortages and build a more diverse workforce. By recruiting paraprofessionals, high school students, and professionals working in other fields, schools can develop educators from within the communities they serve.¹



But attracting aspiring teachers is only the first step. Fledgling educators need consistent, long-term support to build the skills and confidence required for success in the classroom.

Why Coaching Is Essential in Teacher Apprenticeships

Teacher apprentices are learning while doing an extremely complex job. Coaching provides the structure, guidance, and support they need to develop quickly and confidently.

Effective coaching programs help apprentices:

- ✓ Build foundational instructional knowledge
- ✓ Develop and refine classroom practices and skills
- ✓ Learn classroom management strategies
- ✓ Receive guidance and support from a trusted mentor
- ✓ Progress toward certification with clear goals and feedback

When coaching is consistent and structured, apprenticeship programs become powerful pathways into the teaching profession.

Coaching Checklist

for Supporting Teacher Apprenticeship Programs

Use these practices as you build or refine your coaching model to support teacher apprentices from their first lesson through certification.

1 Increase Coaching Frequency Early



Provide coaching multiple times per week (2–3 sessions) for early-stage apprentices. Each coaching cycle should include modeling, observation, feedback, goal-setting, and reflection. As apprentices gain confidence and competency, coaching can gradually taper.

Early support builds the foundation for long-term success.

2 Provide Timely, Targeted Feedback



Coaches should observe lessons regularly and frequently, either in person or through recorded video, and provide actionable feedback tied to clear instructional goals. Encourage apprentices to reflect on their own practice before discussing improvements. Encourage reflection with questions like: “What went well?” and “What could you do differently next time?”

Apprentices learn best when feedback is immediate and specific.

3 Establish Coaching Cohorts



Bring apprentices together in recurring group sessions to review teaching videos, analyze instructional strategies, and discuss challenges.

Cohort coaching fosters a community of practice in which apprentices learn from one another and feel supported throughout the program.

Learning together builds confidence and community.

4 Pair Apprentices with Veteran Teachers



Match each apprentice with an experienced teacher who can provide weekly check-ins, co-teaching opportunities, and informal guidance. These relationships accelerate learning while strengthening collaboration across the school.

Great teachers help grow the next generation of great teachers.

5 Focus on Early Confidence Builders



New teachers face a steep learning curve. Set small weekly goals that lead to quick wins, especially in foundational areas like classroom management and learning environment. As apprentices build these skills, their confidence in tackling instruction will increase.

Early success builds the momentum new teachers need.

6 Define Clear Progress Milestones



Establish clear coaching milestones that align with key teaching skills and certification requirements. This helps apprentices understand what success looks like while giving leaders visibility into each teacher’s growth.

Progress is more sustainable when the path is visible.