

Create Clear Career Growth and Advancement Pathways



Many teachers leave not because they want to stop teaching, but because they see limited opportunities for growth while remaining in the classroom. Creating meaningful career pathways allows districts to retain experienced educators, build leadership capacity, and recognize expertise without requiring teachers to move into administration.

The resources below provide practical guidance and examples for creating teacher leadership opportunities, differentiated career pathways, instructional coaching structures, and leadership development programs. These tools can help districts retain effective educators by recognizing expertise, expanding leadership opportunities, and building meaningful pathways for professional growth without requiring teachers to leave the classroom.

Differentiated Roles and Career Ladders

Develop positions such as mentor teacher, instructional lead, curriculum specialist, or model classroom teacher that allow educators to expand their influence while remaining in the classroom. Establish progressive roles with increasing levels of responsibility, recognition, and compensation tied to demonstrated effectiveness and leadership. Create systems that acknowledge instructional excellence through advanced roles, stipends, release time, or leadership opportunities.

Curated Resources For You:

- [Revised 2026 Kentucky Teacher Leadership Framework \(Coming Soon!\)](#)
- [Teacher Leadership Toolkit 2.0: Strategies to Build, Support, and Sustain Teacher Leadership Opportunities | American Institutes for Research](#)
- [Teacher Leader Model Standards - National Network of State Teachers of the Year](#)
- [Opportunity Culture® Educator Roles](#)
- [University of Maryland Career Teacher Ladder Example](#)
- [National Institute for Excellence in Teaching](#)

Teacher Leadership, Mentoring, and Instructional Coaching

Teachers are more likely to stay when they feel supported, connected, and valued. Mentoring, instructional coaching, and teacher leadership opportunities provide meaningful professional growth while strengthening collaboration and instructional practice. These strategies help districts retain effective educators by creating pathways to lead, support colleagues, and expand their impact without leaving the classroom.

Curated Resources For You:

- [Kentucky Educator Mentorship Program Guidance Document](#)
- [Coaching And Mentoring - Learning Forward](#)
- [New Teacher Center](#)
- [Mentoring & Induction Toolkit 2.0: Supporting Teachers in Underserved Contexts | American Institutes for Research](#)
- [Instructional Coaching: Understanding the Role with Ready-to-Use Resources - NCIL](#)
- [Featured Coaching Resources | Learning Forward](#)
- [Mentoring New Teachers: A Framework For Growth | Learning Forward](#)

MORE RESOURCES TO HELP RETAIN EDUCATORS

Grow-Your-Own Leadership

Develop structured learning experiences that prepare aspiring teacher leaders and administrators through leadership training, problem solving, and job-embedded learning. Offer tuition assistance, scholarships, micro-credentials, and certification support for educators seeking leadership roles. Create opportunities for educators to shadow principals, lead projects, and gain real-world leadership experience before pursuing administrative roles.

Examples and Resources:

- [Wallace Foundation Principal Pipeline Resources](#)
- [Kentucky Association of School Administrators \(KASA\) Aspiring Principals Program](#)
- [Jefferson County Leadership Academy](#)
- [Warren County Schools Grow Your Own](#)
- [Hardin County Schools Grow Your Own](#)

Support the Pursuit of Personalized Professional Learning and Advanced Credentials

Encourage teachers to pursue National Board Certification through financial incentives, cohort support, mentoring, and recognition programs.

Learn more:

- [National Board for Professional Teaching Standards](#)
- [Kentucky National Board Network](#)
- [National Board Certification - Go Teach KY](#)

Encourage use of Kentucky's Educational Cooperatives for personalized professional learning and rank change programs. Align professional development opportunities with individual career goals, instructional interests, and leadership aspirations. Offer financial assistance and mentoring as available.

- Northern Kentucky Cooperative for Educational Services (NKCES): Provides flexible [universal and role-specific CEO II pathways](#) featuring cohort collaboration and individual mentors.
- Green River Regional Educational Cooperative (GRREC): Operates [Elevate Academy](#) (focused on K-12 instructional practice and coaching).
- Western Kentucky Education Cooperative (WKEC): Partners with BloomBoard to offer [RankUp Kentucky](#), featuring five applied courses and a capstone.
- Central Kentucky Educational Cooperative (CKEC): Runs a [Teacher Certification Institute](#) centered on action research and localized professional growth.
- Southeast South-Central Educational Cooperative (SESC): Partners with the Kentucky Education Association (KEA) on [CEO programs](#) designed for P-12 teachers and administrators.
- Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative (OVEC) operates job-embedded [Rank Change Programs](#) in Numeracy, Adolescent Literacy, and Deeper Learning.
- The Kentucky Valley Educational Cooperative (KVEC) offers self-paced [EILA \(Effective Instructional Leadership Act\) credits](#).
- The Kentucky Educational Development Cooperative (KEDC) offers educators the opportunity to earn Rank II or Rank I through their [InvestED CEO Pathways](#).