



Policy Brief

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State-Level Student Teacher Compensation Programs

Executive Summary

Approximately 1,300 students graduate from a Connecticut educator preparation program (EPP) each year. In order to graduate and obtain teacher certification, Connecticut regulations require students to have successfully completed a student teaching placement of at least 10 weeks. This placement consists of intensive, full-time, on-the-job training that is more consistent with apprenticeship-style training than a typical college internship. Unlike the vast majority of college interns, student teachers are unpaid. They are also discouraged, or in some programs prohibited, from working second jobs.

As a recent survey indicates, unpaid student teaching requirements present significant financial stressors that affect 88% of aspiring educators to an extreme or considerable degree. Additionally, opportunities for college students to pursue career paths with paid internships and higher future salaries tend to attract potential aspiring educators into other careers. The financial realities of pursuing teacher certification negatively impact recruitment into the teaching profession.

At a time when school districts are facing persistent vacancies in teaching positions, fewer young adults are entering teacher preparation programs. Since 2020, enrollment in EPPs has declined by 15%. This trend is occurring across the country as EPPs see declines resulting in a crisis in teacher recruitment. Moreover, while Connecticut has sought to increase educator diversity, candidates of color are more likely to consider dropping out of their EPP.

In response, policymakers across the country have been passing or considering legislation establishing paid student teaching. As of December 2025, at least nine states have active statewide paid student teaching programs, with legislation pending in several others (see Table 1, pages 4–5 for a state-by-state listing). Two of these states, Maryland and Pennsylvania, also fund their programs from non-lapsing accounts to ensure continuity. Student teaching compensation programs are primarily funded by a state appropriation to the state agencies overseeing EPPs, which in turn provide stipends to the student teaching participants each oversees.

Currently no traditional undergraduate EPP in Connecticut provides compensation to student teachers. While certain programs that offer some level of compensation for aspiring educators have shown success in attracting educators, these generally serve small numbers of students at the graduate or second-career post-baccalaureate levels. One undergraduate program that provides some degree of compensation, CT NextGen, reaches only about 5% of Connecticut's aspiring educators and does not provide compensation for student teaching. Also, a portion of Connecticut's nascent teacher apprenticeship program seeks to recruit post-baccalaureate and undergraduate students. However, this program has been slow to recruit participants.

As this CEA Policy Brief details, programs that provide student teacher compensation or other forms of financial support during the student teaching semester positively impact teacher recruitment. Evidence from multiple states demonstrates that compensation programs reduce financial barriers to entry into the teaching profession, and they increase racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity in EPPs. The policy brief finds that given Connecticut's ongoing shortages in critical certification areas and high-need districts, instituting a student teaching compensation program offers an equity-driven solution for stabilizing and enlarging the educator workforce.

State policymakers could consider

- Developing a statewide student teaching compensation program for student teachers in undergraduate EPPs
- Expanding apprenticeship program eligibility to all students in EPPs
- Implementing systems of accountability to examine the efficacy of such stipend programs on the recruitment and retention of teachers, and impact on racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity
- Examining school districts' employment trends and shortage areas to discern areas of high need for potential differentiated incentives

Introduction: The Student Teaching Experience

As of 2025, at least nine states have active statewide paid student teaching programs, with legislation pending in several others (See Table 1, pages 4–5). Currently in Connecticut, there is no undergraduate education preparation program that provides compensation to student teachers.

Candidates receiving an initial educator certificate in Connecticut are required by State Board of Education regulations to have successfully completed a student teaching experience.¹ Approximately 1,300 aspiring educators in Connecticut complete this requirement each year.² Given the minimum time commitment of 10 weeks of supervised full-day teaching following the completion of 12 credit hours in an educator preparation program, many colleges and universities structure it as a semester-long, full-time experience for course credit.

Aspiring educators who student teach mirror employees of the district by adhering to contract hours and handbook policies as well attending after-school staff meetings and professional development sessions, as fully certified educators do; student teachers report dedicating a median of 45 hours a week to these responsibilities.³ They are also expected to follow the Connecticut Code of Professional Responsibility for Teachers.⁴

As a result, there are increasing perceptions of student teaching as unaffordable, inequitable, and “exploitative” “unpaid labor.”⁵ To mitigate these rising negativities, there has been increased advocacy for paid student teaching nationwide, including in Connecticut.⁶

Trends in the Teacher Preparation Pipeline

Connecticut has experienced a 15% decrease in educator preparation program candidates between 2020 and 2024.⁷ Nationally, the number of candidates completing preparation programs is lower by hundreds of thousands compared to 2010.⁸

Reasons for this vary, but some have cited less respect for teachers, low pay, and the choice of higher-paying professions instead.⁹ Some have also cited the student teaching experience as a barrier to recruitment.¹⁰ Additionally, perceptions of student teachers as undervalued and the experience as “exploitative” may make a career in teaching less attractive than other options.¹¹ Such perceptions may be even stronger among candidates of color.¹²

“I lived in my car the entire time and nobody new. I needed to graduate with this degree to be safe and have a shot at a better future.”

Additionally, in a 2025 survey released by the Connecticut Education Association Aspiring Educator Program (CEA-AEP), nearly three-quarters

of student teachers reported that their educator preparation program either advised against or explicitly prohibited working outside jobs during their student teaching experience.¹³ Respondents from that same survey noted that even with family help, the financial burden of unpaid student teaching remained heavy, and many reported taking on additional debt or having to work night shifts after student teaching full days to make ends meet.



¹ Regulations of the Connecticut State Board of Education (10-145-431) <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/certification/regulations.pdf>

² https://public-edsight.ct.gov/educators/educator-preparation-provider-quality-measures-report?language=en_US

³ https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-BGji_2FdfNmoEsw5tcQS2ZnQ_3D_3D/

⁴ https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/certification/ethics/code_teachers.pdf

⁵ https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-BGji_2FdfNmoEsw5tcQS2ZnQ_3D_3D/

⁶ See “NEA Aspiring Educators Lead Movement for Paid Student Teaching,” NEA Today, <https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/new-from-nea/nea-aspiring-educators-lead-movement-paid-student-teaching> (accessed 11-7-2025)

⁷ https://public-edsight.ct.gov/educators/educator-preparation-provider-quality-measures-report?language=en_US

⁸ <https://www.nctq.org/research-insights/data-brief-how-do-trends-in-teacher-preparation-enrollment-and-completion-vary-by-state/>

⁹ <https://www.educationnext.org/why-are-fewer-people-becoming-teachers/>

¹⁰ <https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/new-from-nea/nea-aspiring-educators-lead-movement-paid-student-teaching>

¹¹ 63% advised and 11% prohibited from working outside jobs. https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-BGji_2FdfNmoEsw5tcQS2ZnQ_3D_3D/

¹² https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-BGji_2FdfNmoEsw5tcQS2ZnQ_3D_3D/

¹³ 63% advised and 11% prohibited from working outside jobs. https://ceaorg0-my.sharepoint.com/:p/g/personal/hannahs_cea_org/IQB1xinXV06dS6QFBmMOW4mfAXZCTbs8NgTA4sooTGpUfik?rttime=cJ6eg0wo3kg

“...this suffocating debt...I feel, like, kind of duped. I don’t even look at myself as a teacher making enough money to get ahead of the loans that I had to have for the degree that was required for my job.”

Ashley Castelli (quoted by NPR affiliate KALW, 2017)

teachers nationwide borrowed to finance their education yet received a full-time salary 27% less than their fellow college graduates in other careers with similar education levels.¹⁷ Such realizations compromise efforts to recruit and retain educators.

Additionally, financial barriers disproportionately impact entry into the teaching profession for low-income and first-generation college students.^{18,19} Research by the Center for American Progress noted that “Black and Latinx teacher candidates are more likely than their white peers to borrow federal student loans for their undergraduate and graduate education.”^{20,21} Also, non-white candidates are 50% more likely to report considering dropping out. Such barriers and stressors reduce diversity in the teacher workforce and the pool of future teacher candidates as a whole.

These sentiments correspond to a high cost of attendance for Connecticut’s colleges and universities, which ranges from \$30,000 to over \$75,000.^{14,15,16} The return on investment may be less attractive to many who enter into debt to attend.

Sixty percent of

Alternative certification pathways have reduced barriers for teacher candidates by providing lower costs and streamlined coursework. Around 18% of public school teachers in 2016 graduated from

such alternative programs, and the programs report more diversity in their teacher candidates’ race/ethnicity and fields of study.^{22,23} However, graduates of these programs report feeling unprepared and experience much higher turnover rates.²⁴ This not only poses issues for retaining teachers of color, career changers, and teachers in shortage areas but also in recruiting well-trained educators.²⁵

Taken together, recruitment of teacher candidates into traditional and alternative EPPs remains a challenge. Competition also exists from other career paths that include paid internships or apprenticeships at a lower initial net cost. The reality or perception of higher future salaries exacerbates this challenge. As a result, policymakers in a number of states have been working to improve the attractiveness of the teaching profession by providing compensation for the student teaching experience.

“As a mom, student teaching required me to take out loans on top of student loans to ensure I could afford my daily bills.”

CEA Aspiring Educator Survey, 2025



¹⁴ SCSU costs are \$29,444. <https://inside.southernct.edu/onestop/financial-aid/cost-of-attendance-vs-billed-costs>

¹⁵ UCONN costs are \$36,112. <https://financialaid.uconn.edu/cost/>

¹⁶ Quinnipiac costs are \$76,268. <https://www.qu.edu/paying-for-college/undergraduate/costs-and-budgets/>

¹⁷ <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/student-loans-among-teachers-factsheet>

¹⁸ <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/ensure-equitable-access-great-teaching/> (accessed 11/6/25)

¹⁹ <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2021/05/18/first-generation-college-graduates-lag-behind-their-peers-on-key-economic-outcomes/> (accessed 11/6/25)

²⁰ “How To Ensure Equitable Access to Great Teaching - A Proposal for Targeted Grants for Educational Excellence,” Center for American Progress (August 23, 2021) <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/ensure-equitable-access-great-teaching/> (accessed 11/6/25)

²¹ <https://www.kalw.org/2017-07-26/teachers-with-student-debt-these-are-their-stories>

²² <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/overview-teacher-alternative-certification-sector-outside-higher-education/>

²³ <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/tlc/alternative-route-certification>

²⁴ https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Teacher_Turnover_REPORT.pdf

²⁵ <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/tlc/alternative-route-certification>

State Student Teaching Compensation Policies

As of 2025, at least nine states have active statewide paid student teaching programs, with pending legislation in several others. A summary of states and key programmatic elements follows.

Table 1

State	Status and Compensation per Semester	Fund Administration and Program Notes
CA	Active (\$10,000)	Funds to Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) including school districts, charter schools, and county offices of education Golden State Teacher Grant, provides \$10,000-\$20,000 to candidates who commit to teaching in a <i>priority</i> school (defined as schools where about 55% of students or more are low-income, English learners, or in foster care) for 4 years within 8 years after completing the professional preparation program ^{26,27}
CO	Active (\$11,000)	Appropriation to Dept. of Higher Education (CDHE), then to EPPs/disbursements
GA	Proposed (\$7,500)	Public schools and local school systems are authorized to make payments of grant funds to such student teachers in installments during the student teaching component of their teacher education programs. Status: Pending in State House of Representatives (Dec. 2025)
IL	Proposed (\$10,000)	The state's Board of Higher Education would disburse to EPPs. HB 5414 indicates the program is "to reduce financial barriers into the teaching profession...and increase teacher retention." ²⁸ Status: Pending in State Senate (Dec. 2025)
KY	Active (\$5,000)	The Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority shall administer the Student Teacher Stipend Program.
MA	Proposed (\$4,500)	The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will disburse funds to school districts to cover these stipends, and districts will be responsible for administering payments. Status: Pending in Committee (Dec. 2025)

²⁶ <https://legiscan.com/CA/text/SB1391/id/2932671> (accessed 11/6/25)

²⁷ <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/ca-teacher-shortages-workforce-factsheet>

²⁸ <https://legiscan.com/IL/text/HB5414/id/2922004>

State	Status and Compensation per Semester	Fund Administration and Program Notes
MD	Active (\$20,000)	Funding for the program is provided in the state budget. However, the Teacher Development and Retention Fund is established as a special, non-lapsing fund administered by the Maryland Higher Education Commission. Recipients must complete 2 years of service in high-need districts.
MI	Active (\$9,600)	Eligible educator preparation programs shall pay funds received under this section, in entirety, to the eligible student teacher.
MN	Active (\$7,500)	The state allocates money to universities for further distribution. Prioritizes candidates in rural or shortage areas and underrepresented groups, promoting long-term placement stability. ²⁹
NJ	Active (\$4,500)	The state's Higher Education Student Assistance Authority administers this scholarship to students in approved educator preparation programs (EPPs).
NM	Active (\$10,450)	The Public Education Department (PED) requests applications from EPPs.
PA	Active (\$10,000-\$15,000)	Funds for approved student teachers are disbursed to the LEA or non-public school. Incentives for high-need areas: recipients must teach in PA public schools for 3 years or repay the stipend. This includes a higher stipend of \$15,000 for teaching in high-need areas. ³⁰
UT	Active (\$6,000)	State budget allows the superintendent to distribute funds to LEAs.

²⁹ <https://ohe.mn.gov/grant-scholarship/minnesota-student-teacher-grant>

³⁰ <https://www.palegis.us/statutes/unconsolidated/law-information/view-statute?SESSYR=1949&SESSIND=0&ACTNUM=0014.&SMTHLWIND=&CHPT=012B&SCTN=003.&SUBSCTN=000>

Impact on Education Preparation Program Enrollment and Teacher Recruitment

States that provide financial compensation during student teaching report stronger enrollment in educator preparation programs and more diverse applicant pools. According to the Education Commission of the States (ECS), unpaid student teaching limits aspiring educators' "ability to earn the money necessary to cover living expenses and tuition, creating inequitable access to teacher preparation programs."³¹ Recent research from the Learning Policy Institute (LPI) also reinforces this finding. LPI notes that financial supports such as stipends and paid residencies significantly increase participation in teacher preparation programs while improving access for candidates from underrepresented backgrounds.³²

Although state programs compensating student teaching are new, there is initial evidence of their impact on recruitment. Programs in Colorado and Utah show measurable impacts.

Colorado's Stipend for Student Educators Program was created in 2022, providing stipends of \$687.50 per week for 16-week and 32-week programs. Initial enrollment was 831 in FY 2022-2023. Expansions to income and geographic eligibility criteria increased enrollment to 1,323 in FY 2023-2024 for an estimated appropriation of \$21.3 million.^{33,34,35}

Findings from the University of Colorado Denver's Evaluation Center show that the state's stipend program has had a measurable effect on both candidate persistence and overall well-being. According to associate director Susan Connors, the stipends "made a difference on whether teacher candidates continued with their programs or not" by easing financial strain and allowing participants to focus fully on their classroom practice.

Impact on Equity and School Faculty Diversity

Financial support during student teaching is strongly linked to increased recruitment of candidates from underrepresented groups. The National Education Association (NEA)³⁶ and LPI³⁷ each found that when stipends or paid residencies offset living costs, teacher preparation cohorts became more racially and socioeconomically diverse.

Alongside this, to ensure diversity is supported, evidence from the National Center for Teacher Residencies (NCTR) shows that stipends open the door for candidates from underrepresented and lower-income backgrounds who might otherwise be unable to complete their preparation. NCTR found that *67% of participants in paid teacher residency programs identify as a person of color. This far surpasses the 21% of teachers nationally who identify as a person of color.*³⁸



³¹ Erwin, Ben. "Filling the Gaps of Teacher Compensation" Education Commission of the States (9/19/2022) <https://www.ecs.org/filling-in-the-gaps-of-teacher-compensation/>

³² <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/successful-teacher-residencies-brief>

³³ Colorado Department of Higher Education Staff Figure Setting Report. https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/fy2025-26_hedfig1.pdf (p. 65) Colorado Department of Higher Education Staff Figure Setting Report https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/fy2025-26_hedfig1.pdf (p. 65)

³⁴ <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb22-1220> Removing Barriers to Educator Preparation

³⁵ <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb23-1001> Expanding Assistance for Educator Programs

³⁶ NEA Today, "Join the Movement for Paid Student Teaching," <https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/new-from-nea/join-movement-paid-student-teaching>. (Accessed 11/7/2025)

³⁷ Fitz, J. and K. Yun. "Successful Teacher Residencies: What Matters and What Works," Learning Policy Institute, (4/1/2024) <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/successful-teacher-residencies-brief>

³⁸ National Center for Teacher Residencies, (7/18/24), "Teacher Residencies Address the Nation's Teacher Diversity, Shortage, & Effectiveness" <https://nctrresidencies.org/resource/teacher-residencies-address-the-nations-teacher-diversity-shortage-effectiveness/>

Connecticut Education Preparation Program Landscape

There are 19 education preparation programs (EPPs) in Connecticut, nine of which operate at the undergraduate level (see below).

Table 2

Connecticut EPP Programs and Level Served³⁹

Albertus Magnus	U	Fairfield University	G
Mitchell College	U	Quinnipiac University	G
Central Connecticut State University	U-G	Relay Graduate School of Education	G
Eastern Connecticut State University	U-G	Sacred Heart University	G
Southern Connecticut State University	U-G	University of Bridgeport	G
University of Connecticut	U-G	University of New Haven	G
University of Hartford	U-G	Alternate Route to Certification (ARC)	N
University of Saint Joseph	U-G	Area Cooperative Education Services (ACES)	N
Western Connecticut State University	U-G	TRP - Capitol Region Education Council (CREC)	N
		Charter Oak State College	N

U = Undergraduate Only

U-G = Undergraduate and Graduate Levels

G = Graduate Only

N= Non-credit Alternative - Post-Baccalaureate

As of 2025, institutions of higher education in Connecticut with accredited, traditional educator preparation programs (EPPs) do not provide monetary compensation to aspiring educators for their student teaching experience. Some students are compensated through graduate degree and/or certification granting programs and residencies offered through entities such as the following:

- **TRP** – Teacher Residency Program operated by Connecticut Region Education Council (CREC)
- **TCPCG** – Teacher Certification Program for College Graduates at the University of Connecticut
- **University of Bridgeport**
- **Fairfield University**
- **Sacred Heart University**
- **Quinnipiac University**

Some graduate programs offered by private institutions, such as the University of Bridgeport, Fairfield University, Sacred Heart University, and Quinnipiac University, offer pre-student teaching internships with partner districts that include tuition reimbursement or discounts; however, they do not provide direct income. Similarly, post-baccalaureate programs operated by public entities such as TRP and the TCPCG include paid components in their non-traditional certification pathways.

CT's NextGen Educators initiative seeks to promote educator diversity by offering paid options for undergraduate students in the Connecticut State University System, particularly those attending Central Connecticut and Southern Connecticut state universities (CCSU and SCSU). However, these programs offer only up to 2.5 paid days per week and explicitly exclude student teachers from participating in the program.⁴⁰

³⁹ https://portal.ct.gov/dol/-/media/sdecertification/guide-to-approved-educator-preparation-programs-in-connecticut_january-2025.pdf

⁴⁰ CCSU FAQ: "No, you are not eligible to participate in the NextGen Educators program during student teaching. Student Teaching requires you to work in a school setting Monday through Friday for the entire school day. Therefore, you would be unavailable to participate in NextGen." <https://www.ccsu.edu/nextgen/frequently-asked-questions>

By contrast, candidates who pursue traditional teacher preparation programs are typically excluded from these paid alternatives and must complete their student teaching experience without compensation. Many also complete a semester of school placements as a prerequisite to student teaching. Such placements are also unpaid.

Connecticut and Teacher Apprenticeship Programs

Student teaching closely resembles a formal apprenticeship, since both are structured, supervised pathways in which participants progressively assume professional responsibilities while developing specialized skills. Unlike unpaid interns in other careers, student teachers function as integral members of the school staff who deliver instruction, manage classrooms, and plan lessons that directly benefit students and schools. Their contributions free up mentor teachers to take on other instructional or administrative duties, creating a measurable advantage for host districts. This structure is more akin to an apprenticeship model where both the learner and the institution benefit than with the internship model, which primarily serves as a learning experience for the intern alone.⁴¹

In August 2022, the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Labor collaborated to extend traditional apprentice programs to teacher preparation. This federal effort reportedly spurred programs in 45 states that enrolled 2,900 apprentices.⁴² However, the current number of participants per state appears highly variable,⁴³ and the future of federal support is unclear.

In Connecticut, nascent efforts to promote teacher apprenticeships remain slow to register candidates. Connecticut's Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee (JATC) piloted the Teacher Registered Apprenticeship Program (TRAP) in 2024 with Central Connecticut State University students

in coordination with the Waterbury and New Britain school districts. Historically, these programs have served post-baccalaureate and undergraduates.⁴⁴ Students who attend the university and participate in the NextGen or CREC model for at least two years are eligible to receive a stipend of \$10,000 while student teaching and receive progressive pay leading up to that experience; mentor teachers receive compensation of \$6,000. This is funded by the partnering districts, the participants' EPPs, and the state (whose contribution is capped at \$22,500 per apprentice). As of September 2025, despite efforts to expand TRAP's EPP partnerships, three school districts either had yet to pair students alongside mentor teachers or had to withdraw from working with TRAP due to budgetary concerns.⁴⁵ As of December 2025, 21 students were participating in this program, as compared to 4 in 2024, accounting for about 2% of Connecticut's student teachers.

Considerations for Implementing Student Teacher Compensation

Funding Structure

Funds for student teaching compensation are typically appropriated by the state legislature to a state education or higher education agency, which then allocates payments to institutions of higher education or approved educator preparation programs for disbursement to student teachers.^{46,47} Administering stipends or other forms of compensation in Connecticut could come via a state appropriation to CSDE, which oversees EPPs, or the Office of Higher Education, which serves as the authorizer of institutions of higher education in the state. Administration by participating EPPs would ensure better oversight of students' compliance with eligibility criteria and completion of teaching experience requirements.

⁴¹ For a more in depth analysis of the characteristics and permissibility of unpaid internships, see the [Fair Labor Standards Act \(FLSA\)](#) which addresses factors to be considered when determining when a student interns can go unpaid.

⁴² US Department of Education FY 2024 Annual Agency Performance Report. <https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/2025-01/FY2024-Annual-Agency-Performance-Report.pdf> (P. i) (Accessed 11/7/2025)

⁴³ <https://edtrust.org/rti/registered-teacher-apprenticeship-programs/#:~:text=Most%20states%20have%20relied%20on,programs%20are%20funded%20for%20transparency.>

⁴⁴ https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/talent_office/jatc/jatc_meeting_presentation.pptx?rev=fa1315599e104695a4a4aa56af53eab&hash=A8DAA3691A5F737B182010BDCFC69EE1

⁴⁵ <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fact-sheets/71-flsa-internships#:~:text=Background,the%20receipt%20of%20academic%20credit>

⁴⁶ "The Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority shall administer the Student Teacher Stipend Program and shall promulgate administrative regulations in accordance with KRS Chapter 13A as may be needed for administration of the program" <https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/recorddocuments/bill/25RS/HB263/HCS1.pdf> (accessed 10/28/25)

⁴⁷ In Pennsylvania, "The agency, in consultation with the department, shall administer the program and, in the agency's sole discretion, award a grant to an individual who submits a completed application and satisfies the eligibility requirements under section" <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/LI/uconsCheck.cfm?txtType=HTM&yr=1949&sessInd=0&smthLwInd=0&act=014&chpt=12B> (accessed 10/28/25)

Alternatively, proposals to compensate students through a tuition waiver could avoid complexities associated with a state entity making direct payments to student teachers in the form of compensation. However, tuition waivers could also impact students inconsistently and inequitably. Tuition varies across institutions, meaning that students at costlier institutions would receive a larger state subsidy. Also of concern is that for students who qualify for student aid or programs that offset tuition based on need or merit, an additional tuition waiver would provide no financial benefit or incentive.

Financial Sustainability

Creating and maintaining a stipend program would require a recurring state appropriation for each fiscal year or otherwise serve as a mandate on the entity required to compensate participants.

Sustainable funding mechanisms, such as multi-year appropriations or revolving education workforce funds, help maintain consistent stipend distribution and program stability. Some states have relied on one-time or short-term appropriations that negatively affected program continuity for EPPs and participants.

For example, Oklahoma's Student Teacher Stipend Program, launched in 2021 using one-time federal COVID-19 relief dollars, ended after the 2023–2024 school year, once temporary funds had been fully allocated.⁴⁸ Pennsylvania's program faced 130 days of uncertainty in 2025 after the state's failure to pass a budget with an approved spending plan. As a result, the state's Student Teacher Support Program was held in limbo for thousands of aspiring educators.⁴⁹



To address such uncertainty, some states have established dedicated non-lapsing funds, such as Maryland's Teacher Development and Retention Fund.⁵⁰ Consistent funding supports participant engagement and enables structured program evaluation and accountability over time.

Equity, Eligibility, and Accountability

Program eligibility varies across states. California's Golden State Teacher Grant targets school districts serving primarily low-income students.⁵¹ Minnesota prioritizes student teachers who are "racially or ethnically underrepresented" or who would serve in shortage areas.⁵² Some states do not include such limiting eligibility requirements.

To provide accountability, some programs require recipients to commit to teaching in a public school in the state for a certain period of time. For example, Pennsylvania requires three years of service.⁵³ Students who fail to meet such service commitment in a public school would be required to pay back funds to the state.

Program Evaluation

Because statewide stipend programs are relatively new, the evidence on their long-term effects on teacher recruitment or retention is limited, but early evaluations suggest positive short-term outcomes. For example, Colorado's Stipends for Student Educators Program specifically prioritizes Pell-eligible students and, through the use of COVID relief funds, has targeted lower-income students. Its evaluation remains in early stages.⁵⁴ Similarly, while there are no studies done yet on the impacts of Pennsylvania's Student Teacher Support Program, it was oversubscribed in its first year, receiving over 3,500 applications for roughly 650 awards, which suggests high interest in its availability.⁵⁵

⁴⁸ <https://readytogether.sde.ok.gov/sites/default/files/2021-07/Paid%20Student%20Teaching%20Initiative.pdf>

⁴⁹ <https://www.pheaa.org/schools-partners/primary-schools/pa-student-teacher-support-program-info>

⁵⁰ <https://law.justia.com/codes/maryland/education/division-iii/title-18/subtitle-27/section-18-2706/#:~:text=EFFECTIVE%20UNTIL%20JUNE%2030%2C%202029%20PER%20CHAPTER,to%20fulfill%20a%20service%20obligation%20as%20a>

⁵¹ <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/ca-teacher-shortages-workforce-factsheet>

⁵² <https://ohe.mn.gov/grant-scholarship/minnesota-student-teacher-grant>

⁵³ <https://www.palegis.us/statutes/unconsolidated/law-information/view-statute?SESSYR=1949&SESSIND=0&ACTNUM=0014.&SMTHLWIND=&CHPT=012B&SCTN=003.&SUBSCTN=000>

⁵⁴ <https://education.ucdenver.edu/about-us/newsroom/news/collaborating-to-give-teacher-ed-students-a-voice-in-future-policy--evaluating-the-impact-of-colorado-s-educator-stipends>

⁵⁵ <https://www.chalkbeat.org/philadelphia/2024/04/12/pennsylvania-student-teacher-stipend-program-demand-exceeds-funding/>

Institutional Capacity and Mentor Compensation

In most states with student teacher stipend programs, compensation for mentor or cooperating teachers is not included in the same legislation that authorizes payments to student teachers. Instead, mentor pay, when provided, is typically managed through district funds, residency grants, or separate mentoring programs administered by state education agencies.

Pennsylvania is currently the only state where mentor teacher stipends are authorized within the same statute as student teacher stipends. Under the Student Teacher Support Program, student teachers receive \$10,000–\$15,000, and cooperating teachers are eligible for stipends up to \$2,500.⁵⁶

Other states, including Minnesota and Colorado, authorize mentor or induction stipends under separate provisions. Minnesota allows districts to use grant funds to pay experienced teachers who mentor candidates or novice teachers,⁵⁷ and Colorado's Teacher Mentor Grant Program provides \$2,000–\$2,500 annually to mentors depending on certification level.⁵⁸

In Connecticut, cooperating teachers are certified teachers who oversee student teaching participants. Compensation for cooperating teachers is primarily paid by the host school district as outlined in their negotiated teacher contract. Additionally, some cooperating teachers are paid by EPPs.⁵⁹ The state provides support for substitute teachers, but unlike some other states, there is no state-level stipend for teachers assigned to mentor student teachers.

In addition, mentors participating in the Connecticut Teacher Residency Program receive \$6,000 per academic year for hosting a resident teacher.⁶⁰ Partnering EPPs also provide additional compensation or incentives to mentor teachers, supplementing district-based stipends.

Conclusion

Evidence from multiple states demonstrates that stipends and other forms of financial support during the student teaching semester increase enrollment in educator preparation programs, improve retention rates among new teachers, and promote greater racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity within the profession. Given Connecticut's ongoing shortages in critical certification areas and high-need districts, instituting a paid student teaching program offers an equity-driven solution for stabilizing and enlarging the educator workforce.

Removing financial barriers to the completion of clinical preparation would allow aspiring educators, particularly those from underrepresented and economically disadvantaged backgrounds, to enter the profession on more equitable terms. In doing so, Connecticut would create a workforce that more accurately reflects the diversity of its student population while strengthening the overall quality of classroom instruction.

Student teaching compensation could elevate the professional status of student teachers and also allow for measurable benefits in recruitment, retention, and instructional quality throughout Connecticut's public schools.

State policymakers could consider:

- Developing a statewide student teaching compensation program for student teachers in undergraduate EPPs
- Expanding apprenticeship program eligibility to all students in EPPs
- Implementing systems of accountability to examine the efficacy of such stipend programs on the recruitment and retention of teachers and their impact on racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity
- Examining school districts' employment trends and shortage areas to discern areas of high need for potential differentiated incentives

⁵⁶ <https://www.pa.gov/governor/newsroom/2024-press-releases/governor-shapiro-increase-in-funding-student-teachers-receive-st>

⁵⁷ Minnesota's Statute 122A.70 <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/122A.70>

⁵⁸ <https://education.ucdenver.edu/about-us/newsroom/news/collaborating-to-give-teacher-ed-students-a-voice-in-future-policy--evaluating-the-impact-of-colorado-s-educator-stipends>

⁵⁹ The state provides support to school districts for costs associated with substitute teacher coverage. Unlike TEAM Mentors who receive a state stipend, Cooperating Teachers do not receive state compensation.

⁶⁰ <https://www.ct-trp.org/mentors-and-sponsor-teachers/>