

Teacher Apprenticeship Tennessee



The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) approved the first nationally registered K-12 teacher apprenticeship program in Tennessee in January 2022, opening the door to a rapidly growing pathway for prospective teachers. Since then, DOL has approved registered teacher apprenticeships in more than 30 states.

What Is Teacher Apprenticeship?

Teacher apprenticeship is an “earn and learn” pathway to a teaching credential that provides structured, paid, on-the-job learning experiences combined with job-related technical instruction and mentorship. Teacher candidates serving as apprentices are paid by their employer while they participate in the program, helping to make their pathway into the profession more affordable.

Tennessee Teacher Apprenticeship by the Numbers



76 local educational agencies



91% retention/completion rate



11 educator preparation providers



645 apprentices

Paving the Way

The **Tennessee Grow Own (GYO) model** became the first registered teacher apprenticeship program in the country in January 2022. Tennessee’s model is designed to foster partnerships between educator preparation programs (EPPs) and school districts and to provide innovative, cost-efficient pathways to the teaching profession by increasing EPP enrollment and growing the supply of qualified teachers.

Tennessee supports its teacher apprenticeship programs through the **Tennessee GYO Center**, established in May 2022 through a partnership between the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) and the University of Tennessee System. The GYO Center’s mission is to strengthen the educator pipeline through partnership development, program innovation, and resourcing and support. The GYO Center supports school districts by being a one-stop shop for technical assistance and accurate information on such topics as funding strategies and how to perform needs assessments.

Journey to Teacher Apprenticeship

March 2020

GYO initiative launches in alignment with the TDOE “Best for All” strategic plan.

October 2020

TDOE awards \$2 million in grant funding to seven state EPPs to form or expand GYO partnerships.

August 2020

First round of Tennessee GYO partnerships are launched in Clarksville-Montgomery and Austin Peay State University.

January 2023

The inaugural GYO Center team is hired, and 214 registered teacher apprentices enroll in addition to the 98 enrolled from the fall of 2022.

February 2023

TDOE and Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development announce a partnership to secure continued investment and financial commitment for registered teacher apprenticeship.

December 2023

A cumulative total of 708 aspiring educators are enrolled as registered teacher apprentices, and 91 percent are either still enrolled or have completed the program.

“Diverse candidates are really attracted to teacher apprenticeships because it does allow for folks to work while becoming a teacher.”

Dr. Erin Crisp, Executive Director, Tennessee GYO Center

January 2022

The Tennessee GYO model becomes the first nationally approved, permanent Teacher Occupation Apprenticeship program.

May 2022

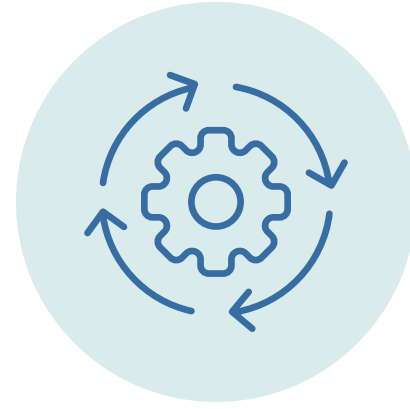
TDOE and the University of Tennessee System launches the Tennessee GYO Center to develop further innovative educator credentialing, garner additional endorsements, and create more opportunities for professional development.

Benefits for Teacher Apprentices

- Cost efficient
- Mentoring
- On-the-job learning
- PRAXIS test preparation
- Emergency support services (e.g., emergency child care)

Designing High-Quality Learner Experiences:

In designing teacher apprenticeship programs, Tennessee uses a design triad—balancing **efficiency**, **effectiveness**, and **appeal**—to ensure high-quality learner experiences for teacher apprentices.



Efficiency

Recognize and value the competencies that individuals bring to the table; eliminate the duplication of effort for learners to have to “re-prove” a skill that they have already developed.



Effectiveness

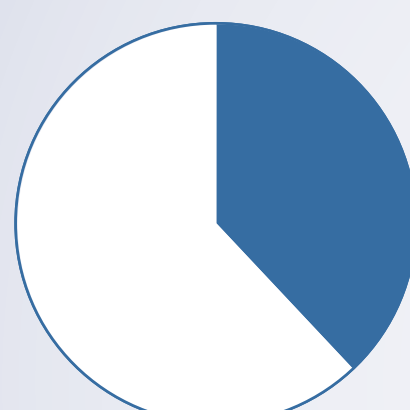
Maintain alignment to quality of standards. Teacher apprenticeship is not a shortcut or a fast track; it requires all the same demonstrations of competencies of a traditional program.



Appeal

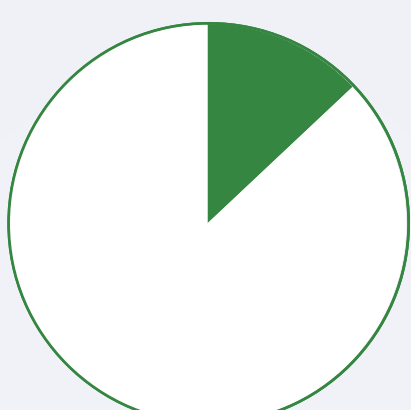
Teacher apprenticeship programs should be motivating and engaging! Consider how to build appealing engagement components into programs, such as cohort models that promote relationships and meaningful connections with fellow apprentices.

Closing the Gap: Diversifying the Educator Workforce Through Teacher Apprenticeship In Tennessee



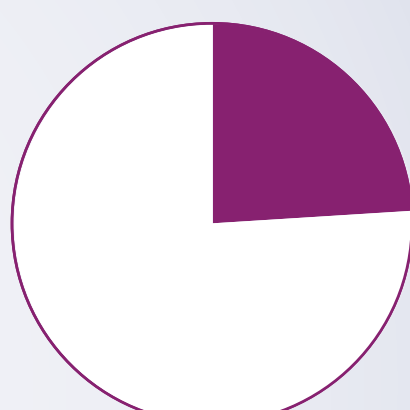
K-12 Students

38% non-White, 62% White



K-12 Educators

13% non-White, 83% White



Teacher Apprentices

24% non-White, 76% White

“We are starting to see some positive gains with regard to matching the diversity of our educators with the population that they teach.”

Dr. Erin Crisp, Executive Director, Tennessee GYO Center

Funding Teacher Apprenticeship



- TDOE funded a **\$2 million** grant to support the development of GYO.
- TDOE received **\$20 million** from DOE to establish a more permanent GYO model.
- Tennessee designated an additional **\$5 million** annually for further development of teacher apprentices and the GYO Center.

Lessons Learned from Tennessee

In an interview with the Region 5 Comprehensive Center, Dr. Erin Crisp shared the following lessons learned from their teacher apprenticeship work. [Watch the 7-minute video here.](#)

- A mindset shift was required to embrace the perspective that teacher apprenticeship is a strategic, long-term strategy for educator workforce development.
- The role of the state educational agency is to strategize and design solutions with school and university partners—and remember that a solution for one partnership may look different for another partnership; solutions often are not “one size fits all.”
- Programs can bring together college partners in the school of education with the individuals within the college who support adult learners and know how best to meet the needs of adult learners.
- Many people are interested in becoming teachers when presented with the opportunity! Schools often know individuals in the school community who have been involved in the school in various capacities and would be excellent candidates for an apprenticeship.



Want to learn more about teacher apprenticeship in Tennessee?

[Watch the Tennessee Teacher Apprenticeship video series](#)
[Dive into the Tennessee Teacher Apprenticeship Program Playbook](#)