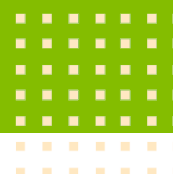




## Viewpoints

# Teacher Apprenticeship Programs, Recently Defunded, Remain a Viable Option for Filling Vacancies



The growth of teacher-apprenticeship programs reflects a broader shift in how the education sector is tackling persistent educator shortages—especially in high-need areas such as special education, STEM, and bilingual instruction. These innovative, on-the-job training models allow school districts to tap into a pipeline of nontraditional candidates—often paraprofessionals and other school-based staff—who already understand the school culture and student needs. By offering paid, debt-free pathways to licensure and degrees, apprenticeships address both workforce development and equity in access to the teaching profession.

While the recent termination of the Educator Registered Apprenticeship (ERA) Intermediary contract by the Department of Labor may slow the centralized support and technical assistance for these programs, the movement is far from halted. With widespread approval for registered teacher-apprenticeship programs across 48 states and territories, and a strong foundation laid by organizations like the National Center for Grow Your Own, states and districts remain well-positioned to continue scaling these efforts.

The continued resilience and adaptability of local education agencies—especially in navigating funding uncertainties—signals strong momentum for apprenticeship-based teacher preparation models in the years ahead.

The U.S. Department of Labor canceled a five-year contract for the Educator Registered Apprenticeship Intermediary May 2, ending the program in the middle of its second year. The contract, worth up to \$13 million, paid a coalition of education research organizations, led by the North Carolina-based Research Triangle Institute, to guide apprenticeship providers through the legal, logistical, and fundraising hoops necessary to launch new programs.

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