

Reimagining School Staffing:

Recommendations from Teach Plus MS Policy Fellows

Introduction

As educators and Teach Plus Mississippi Policy Fellows who teach across grade levels and districts in the Magnolia State, we recognize the important role dedicated, thriving teachers play in the academic success of our students. School districts across several states - including Mississippi - are piloting efforts to reimagine and redesign their school staffing models. These models are not only making collaborative, leadership-oriented school environments, but are also having a positive impact on teacher satisfaction. And when these models are coupled with high-quality instructional materials (HQIM), they are producing promising results for students. This memo provides a framework for how legislative action, such as the proposed strategic staffing pilot program, can modernize the profession and significantly accelerate student learning outcomes.

School Staffing Redesign Models

While these models can vary significantly across schools and districts, they typically incorporate the following elements:

- + **Team-Based Staffing:** Enhances student outcomes through team teaching, and by pairing teachers with co-teachers or teaching assistants, in order to foster a highly collaborative instructional environment.
- + **Differentiated Roles and Compensation:** Provides high-performing teachers with leadership pathways—often involving mentorship or professional development opportunities—that include increased compensation for specialized roles, service in hard-to-staff schools, or measurable student growth.
- + **Time for Collaboration and Support:** Guarantees dedicated, protected time within the school day for educators to engage in mentorship, peer collaboration, and data-driven decision-making.
- + **Flexibility in Staffing and Scheduling:** Partners schools with experts in the field to redesign schedules and staffing models that improve school climate and extend the impact of top-tier educators to more students. These structures are also designed to operate within the school's current budget to ensure long-term viability.
- + **Integrated Preparation Pathways:** Offers clear career ladders for all staff—from teaching assistants to veteran educators—enabling professional advancement and salary growth while remaining in the classroom.

To gain a comprehensive understanding of how these models operate in practice, we conducted site visits to elementary schools in the Jackson Public School District that are currently piloting school staffing redesign models, in partnership with [Opportunity Culture](#) and [Leading Educators](#). We also conducted focus groups with teachers who have firsthand experience with these new leadership roles and can speak to the impact these models have on both the teaching profession and student outcomes.

Teachers from the following school districts participated in these focus groups:

- + [Lincoln School District](#), Arkansas
- + [Ector County Independent School District](#), Texas
- + [Madison Parish School District](#), Louisiana
- + [Rockingham County School District](#), North Carolina

Positive Impact on Student Outcomes and the Teaching Profession

1. Teachers are eager for leadership opportunities that enable them to advance their career without having to leave the classroom.

Focus group participants expressed strong support for the new leadership opportunities provided through school staffing redesign models. They were specifically energized by roles like the Multi-Classroom Leader (MCL), which allows them to provide instructional oversight and coaching while collaborating with novice teachers and teacher assistants. This finding is consistent with a recent [SREB report](#) in which teachers expressed a need for “a fulfilling career trajectory...with opportunities to lead and grow from their classrooms”.

“I've always known that I do not want to be an administrator, like, I don't want to be a principal, but I do want to grow, like, I want to have other opportunities to be a leader.” **Multi-Classroom Leader from the Lincoln School District (AR)**

2. Formal mentorship and professional development opportunities lead to better instruction and greater teacher retention and job satisfaction.

Increased opportunities for professional development and mentorship are key features of successful staffing redesign models. roles are closely tied to higher performance, increased collaboration, and improved teacher retention. Formalizing teacher leadership serves as a

powerful catalyst for improving school culture and professional longevity. By implementing distributed leadership models where educators are involved in key decision-making processes, schools see a significant boost in job satisfaction.

"We had a teacher whose students were consistently scoring below proficient on math assessments. Using that data, I helped her identify the gaps, modeled several lessons, and provided ongoing monitoring and guidance to help her grow stronger as an educator."

📍 **Multi-Classroom Teacher from Rockingham County School District (NC)**

3. School staffing redesign models have improved student outcomes.

Moving away from isolated teaching models directly correlates with student success, particularly through methods like co-teaching, which provides vital support for the most vulnerable learners. [Data](#) from models utilizing MCLs shows that students taught by them or their team-led teachers gain an additional 2–7 months of learning in reading and math each year compared to their peers in traditional settings. These gains demonstrate that when teachers are supported by innovative staffing, students reap the academic rewards.

"Student data is tracked at the state, local, and district level. Test scores in reading improved 20 points in 2 years, and math increased 10 points. There was also a decrease in disciplinary issues." 📍 **Multi-Classroom Leader from Ector County ISD (TX)**

Recommendations for Policymakers

1. Support a school staffing redesign pilot program that's aligned to the five criteria for successful models.

Policymakers both within our Legislature and MDE have discussed the expansion of school staffing redesign opportunities for more Mississippi school districts. As they work to advance these policies, they should **prioritize creating a pilot program that is aligned to the five criteria for school staffing redesign models**. Aligning to the criteria will ensure that school staffing and scheduling structures are centered around collaboration, teacher growth and advancement, and improved student outcomes. Policymakers should also prioritize establishing pilots in underserved communities and/or underperforming schools.

2. Require school districts to partner with “expert partner organizations” with a track record of successful redesign efforts.

While support from MDE will be very important for districts seeking to implement school staffing redesign models, it will be equally important to districts to engage in this work with proven experts in the field. Several organizations - including Public Impact, the staffing redesign partner in the Jackson Public School District - have years of experience and have supported the models across multiple states and different school types. Districts that work with proven partners will be far more likely to improve student outcomes.

3. Require the use of high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) for all pilot districts to ensure the greatest possible impact on student learning.

As Mississippi continues to expand these school staffing redesign pilots, it is critical that state leaders recognize the vital role of **High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM)** in the success of these models. Evidence from similar programs nationwide, including work led by Teach Plus’s [Center for Inspired Teaching and Exceptional Learning \(CITEL\)](#), demonstrates that while effective team structures can boost collaboration and teacher satisfaction, the **caliber of the content being taught is what ultimately drives student achievement**. Therefore, it’s imperative that HQIM is prioritized through formal law, policy, and classroom practice.

Conclusion

The transition toward strategic school staffing represents a fundamental shift from a static workforce to a dynamic, professionalized career ladder. By codifying support for these models and pairing them with High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM), Mississippi can provide its educators with the mentorship and compensation they deserve while ensuring students receive top-tier instruction. We urge legislators and other state policymakers to move forward with the proposed pilot programs, prioritizing under-resourced districts to foster a more equitable and resilient education system. Investing in these innovative staffing models today is an investment in the long-term academic success and economic prosperity of our state.

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About Teach Plus

The mission of Teach Plus is to empower excellent, experienced, and diverse teachers to take leadership over key policy and practice issues that advance equity, opportunity, and student success. In pursuing this mission, Teach Plus is guided by the Student Opportunity Mandate: All students should have the opportunity to achieve their potential in an education system defined by its commitment to equity, its responsiveness to individual needs, and its ability to prepare students for postsecondary success.

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