Financial Incentives to Address the Teacher Shortage

Pay stipends for classroom supplies
- Teachers report spending an average of $500-$1,000 a year on supplies. Offsetting these out-of-pocket expenditures via annual stipend or allowance, especially in settings with a higher concentration of students living in poverty, would provide a small amount of support.
- Could pair this with a revenue stream based on student demographics in each site such as an increase in compensatory revenue.

Start teachers at a higher step on the salary schedule
- Districts already have the ability to negotiate initial salary with new hires while they are in pre-employment status
- Could pair this with a revenue stream modeled on Training and Experience revenue, a dedicated funding stream from the state that provided support to districts with teachers moving through the salary schedule.

Reimburse educational expenses related to earning licensure in a shortage area
- Identify shortage areas in a school or site and work with existing teachers to add a license in that area.

Make school staffing guarantees (counselors, social workers, nurses, parent liaisons) in shortage areas
- Ensure that students and staff have targeted, appropriate support in schools via licensed support staff.
- Could pair this with a revenue stream with dedicated funds and maintenance of effort requirements for licensed school support staff.

Provide co-teaching assignments for new and experienced teachers
- Support newer teachers by pairing them with a trained, more-experienced partner teacher for at least a year, up to three years.
- In-classroom support and mentoring provided by a colleague allows teachers additional time to grow in shortage areas.

Ensure that master teachers are assigned in shortage areas in each building to support classroom teachers
- Support all teachers via master teachers assigned to each building with roles that change based on the needs of the staff and students
- Master teachers could provide staff development, model different classroom activities or lessons, co-teach, work with cohorts of teachers and students, and assist in other instructional leadership tasks.
Assign dedicated building subs to cover for people during team meetings or additional PD time

- Assign substitute coverage to schools to ensure that a licensed teacher is available to cover for colleagues.
- Full-time building level subs would make it easier for teachers to leave classrooms for full or partial days to work with collegial teams or small groups of students, attend professional development, etc.

Determine professional development needs and provisions at the site level

- Utilize staff development provisions in law to strengthen staff development decisions at the site level to align more closely with teacher and student needs
- Provide a site-based mechanism for funding staff development efforts that address gaps in student and staff competencies without a district-level mandate

Create site-based parent support teams or positions to address attendance or other challenges

- Parent liaisons are an important position for integrating parent voice and involvement into schools and assist classroom teachers in meeting attendance goals, etc.
- Parents of color have noted that they find it difficult to navigate school systems and advocate for their family’s needs; site-based teams with parent and teacher decision-makers could address these barriers.

Utilize a full-service community school model

- Targeted strategies that meet the needs of individual sites and provide specific supports based on the population serve can improve school climate and facilitate better outcomes.
- Dedicated funding for this is being piloted and can be expanded

Build team planning time with release time and autonomy to work in departments / grade levels / in groups that support specific groups of students into the regular schedule

- Use subs, early release time, or other flexible scheduling options to provide teacher teams self-directed time to work on student needs.

Provide leave / financial support to EAs who seek a license in a shortage area

- “Residency” programs that target educational assistants to move from school support to teaching jobs allow staff already committed to a school to move into instructional jobs
- Barriers like inability to afford classes, take time off, or pay for tuition can be addressed by stipends, reduced eligibility for benefits for those enrolling part-time in school, reduced tuition or tuition cost-assistance, etc.

Pay “Incentive payments” or “economic supplements”

- Signing, hiring, or retention bonuses for teachers that accept assignments in shortage areas
- Contracts ranging from United Teachers of San Francisco and Denver Education Association provide for cash payments for schools with shortage areas.
- These should be designed to encourage and support retention rather than just a hiring bonus. Some research indicates that these incentives can have a negative impact on retention.¹
Allow for movement to an advanced lane on the salary schedule when teachers accept assignments in shortage areas

- Rather than rely on education credits, allow teachers who take and remain in a shortage areas to change lanes based on locally-determined criteria
- Financial benefits to teachers (lower cost to move lanes than paying for credits) accrue on an existing salary structure and require few changes to compensation arrangements.

Provide a bonus to teachers who give early retirement notices to allow for internal and external hiring earlier in the year

- Based on an example from Hoquiam School District (Washington), which offered $2,000 to senior teachers who provided notice of retirement by February 1.ii

Provide additional support and compensation for National Board certification

- NBCT certification is expensive but ultimately beneficial for teachers and students.
- Compensation for teachers who have earned National Board certification can provide an incentive, but assistance in offsetting the costs of the process up-front can also help.

Provide support for childcare expenses in the form of a subsidy, reimbursement, or a site-based childcare option.

- Childcare costs can rival and outstrip mortgage costs for many families. Providing financial support for teachers in a shortage area may serve as an important incentive.

Create a spousal hiring policy to allow married teachers moving into shortage areas or districts greater ease of finding a job and transitioning to a new home

- Preferential hiring policies that allow married teachers to more easily find work in the same district can address barriers to moving to rural or isolated areas.iii

Provide college tuition assistance for dependents and tuition-free or discounted tuition for advanced degrees or additional licensure areas at state colleges and universitiesiv

- The cost of college tuition, either for oneself or one’s dependents is a frequently-cited barrier to becoming and staying a teacher.
- Districts or the state of Minnesota could work with colleges and universities on tuition remission and discounts for teachers and their dependents when they accept and remain in a shortage area.

Provide loan forgiveness for teachers who accept assignments in shortage areasv

- The cost of student loan debt averages $32,000 in Minnesota; evidence suggests this is higher for teachers and a significant barrier for teachers to stay in the profession.
- Districts and the state can provide and expand financial assistance to teachers for loan repayment, including loan forgiveness options in shortage areas.

Provide housing assistance for teachers in shortage areas.

- Affordable housing is a significant challenge in urban, suburban, and rural settings. High rent and/or lack of affordable housing options are both problems.
- Different options for housing assistance include subsidized housing, district-provided housing, and housing search services.vi


iii Ibid.

iv NEA study, James B. Hunt, Jr. Institute, “Recruiting Quality Teachers to Hard-to-Staff Schools.”
