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The Role of Accompaniment in School-Based Pathways to Educator Pathways

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Abstract

As schools face ongoing teacher shortages, grow-your-own educator pathways offer a promising solution but often require working adults to navigate competing demands of employment, education, family, and finances. This session explores the role of accompaniment, the intentional practice of mentoring, coaching, and walking alongside learners, as a framework for supporting nontraditional teacher candidates through these contradictions.

Drawing on the experience of Martin Luther School's Teacher Apprenticeship Program (TAP), presenters will share how paraprofessionals and school staff have pursued teaching degrees while remaining employed full-time through partnerships with the Community College of Philadelphia and several regional Universities. Since 2021, 16 participants have graduated from the program.

Participants will examine how mentorship, institutional partnerships, and flexible pathways can increase educator retention, strengthen school communities, and create sustainable pipelines into the profession. Attendees will leave with practical ideas for building and supporting grow-your-own teacher programs rooted in access, persistence, and community.

Keywords: Accompaniment, Teacher Education, Transfer Pathways