

Cultivating Teachers: Sowing Seeds in Pre-Apprenticeships

May 1, 2026

ACTE WBL Conference

Providence, Rhode Island

Paraprofessional to Teacher Apprenticeship Pathway

Georgia Registered Teaching Apprenticeship Program



Your journey from paraprofessional to
teacher starts here.



Office of Rural Education and Innovation Georgia Registered Teaching Apprenticeship Program



Laura Ergle, Ed.D.

College and Career Readiness Specialist

Pre-Apprenticeship Coordinator

laura.ergle@doe.k12.ga.us



Heather Finley, Ed.S.

Teacher Recruitment and Retention Specialist

Apprenticeship Program Coordinator

Heather.Finley@doe.k12.ga.us



Today's Purpose:

Learn how districts in Georgia are leveraging pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships to build sustainable teacher pipelines.

- ✓ **Explore** why apprenticeship programs align with Gen Z's ideology and how pre-apprenticeships can fill teaching pipelines with “home grown” talent.
- ✓ **Identify** key components of a “grow your own” teacher development model tailored to rural workforce and community needs.
- ✓ **Gather** practical resources and strategies to initiate or enhance a teaching apprenticeship program in your district.
- ✓ **Leave inspired** to take actionable steps toward cultivating future educators from within your own community.

Georgia's Journey in Teaching Apprenticeships



July 2023: Para to Teacher Pipeline Grant with ESSER Funding

September 2023-September 2024: Work with Educator Preparation Programs to improve accessibility to Para to Teacher Programs

January 2024: Began Researching the Viability of Registered Teaching Apprenticeships

March 2024-September 2024: Collaborative cross-agency work to create standards and a work process schedule that had clearly defined roles: Sponsor vs. Employer

July 2024: Apprenticeship Building America 2 Grant Recipient

- *\$3.9 million to support the development and expansion of education pre-apprentices that transition into registered teaching apprenticeships in rural Georgia.*

November 2024: Formal Launch of the Georgia Registered Teaching Apprenticeship Program

Note: GA is an OA State

Paraprofessional to Teacher Apprenticeship Pathway

Georgia Registered Teaching Apprenticeship Program

- **Apprentice Basics:**

- Must be employed as a paraprofessional*
- Must work at least 19 hours per week and paid a minimum of \$12.00 per hour
- Must be enrolled in an undergraduate degree program at a GaPSC-approved EPP or technical school, preferably 100% online**
- Districts must provide some or all tuition assistance (a variety of Federal and State grants can support apprentice programs)

- **Job-Embedded Program Requirements:**

- Focus on GaRTAP Competencies with alignment to course progression
 - [GaDOE K-12 Teaching Apprenticeship Competencies](#)
- Assigned mentor through the apprenticeship

*Can transition to a teacher of record (intern/resident) if they have 75 credit hours or completed 75% of competencies, LEA uses certification waivers

**Paraprofessionals can transition into apprenticeships at any point in their post-secondary journey



Paraprofessional to Teacher Apprenticeship Pathway

Georgia Registered Teaching Apprenticeship Program

Pre-Apprenticeships are designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in Registered Apprenticeship programs.

Pre-Apprenticeship programs must:

- Offer [Teaching as a Profession or Early Childhood Pathways](#) either through CTAE Coursework or Dual Enrollment
- Complete a practicum and/or allow for Work-Based Learning Opportunities
- Provide mentorship throughout the pre-apprenticeship
- Have a facilitated entry to transition into a registered apprenticeship program



Pre-Apprenticeships programs may also:

- Be offered to potential teaching candidates that are working on their core classes that are not ready to be a full registered apprentice or waiting for an apprenticeship spot to open
 - Their OJL may be teaching assistants/aides, substitute teaching, classroom volunteer, after school program, or other experiences that allow them to interact with students
- Prepare students to take the paraprofessional exam
- Provide some supplemental services and tuition assistance

29
School Districts

**Paraprofessional to Teacher
Apprenticeship Pathway**
Georgia Registered Teaching Apprenticeship Program



**Your journey from paraprofessional to
teacher starts here.**



19
RTI Providers

45
Pre-Apprentices

2
Completers

139
**Registered
Apprentices**

MEET GEN Z



56% of Gen Z teens believe a skills-based education (such as trades, nursing, STEM) makes sense in today's world.

More than **50%** of Gen Z teens say they are open to pursuing something other than a four-year bachelor's degree to prepare for their futures.

47% of Gen Z teens agree a post-secondary education should last less than four years.

Hanover Research 2024

**A pipeline is only as
strong
as its SOURCE!**

**Apprenticeship Models
CAN and SHOULD
be used to attract
GEN Z to
the educator
workforce.**



**Who
remembers
playing the
game of
LIFE?**





Meet with your High School Counselor!

You tell your HS Counselor you are interested in becoming a Teacher. Enroll in Early Childhood Education Pathway.

Congratulations! You are accepted as an Educator Pre-Apprentice in a district that has a Para to Teacher Apprenticeship Program.

Begin Teaching as a Profession Pathway and enroll in dual enrollment courses.

The background is a colorful board game board. It features various life events and financial goals. On the left, there's a section labeled 'Millionaire Estates'. In the center, there's a circular area with 'GET MARRIED LIFE' and 'Pros'. On the right, there's a section labeled 'GET MARRIED LIFE'. At the bottom, there's a section labeled 'Buy books and supplies Pay \$5,000'. The board is divided into different colored sections, each with its own theme and illustrations of people and objects.

Hired:

Summer Camp Counselor
Earn \$2,000

Hired:

Teacher assistant in the ABC Elementary School
as a Pre-Apprentice,
Work-Based Learning Program
10 hours per week, \$10.00 per hour -
Earn \$4,000

High School Graduation!

Accepted at ABC College

Tuition and living expenses:
\$12,000 per year for 2 years to
complete Pre- Education AAS Degree
Take out student loan: \$24,000

High School Graduation!

Earned 24 college credit hours in dual enrollment

Hired as a Registered Apprentice

\$12.00 per hour

Enrolled in technical school to complete Pre-
Education AAS Degree, tuition and fees covered

2-year earnings: \$34,560

Rent your first apartment!

Need to work full-time at a local day care to afford living expenses; withdrew from school for 2 years

Earnings: \$10.00 per hour

2-year earnings: \$40,000

Car Repair Needed!

Cost: \$1500

Assistance Received: \$1,000

Access Apprenticeship Supportive Services /WIOA

Pay: \$500

Return to College!

Must quit job at day care to complete education prep program requirements and student teaching

Take out Loan: \$24,000

Complete AAS Degree in Pre-Education!

Wage increase to \$14.00 per hour

Enter education preparation program with tuition and fees covered; earn wages throughout the entire program

Earn: \$21,000 per year x 2 years

\$42,000



Congrats, Grads!



**Currently Seeking
Position in a School**

Age: 23

Debt: \$48,000

**Earnings from part and
full time work:**

\$42,000

Anticipated Retirement

Age: 53

**Guaranteed Job as a 2nd
Grade Teacher!**

Age: 21

Debt: \$0

**Earnings in Pre-
Apprenticeship and
Apprenticeship Program:**

\$82,560

**Earned 3 years towards
retirement during
apprenticeship**

Anticipated Retirement Age:

48

Pre-Apprenticeship Pathway



Rural District #1 High School Pathway Teaching as a Profession



High School Pre-Apprentice

- Student complete Teaching as a Profession pathway in high school.
- Completes a practicum in a Science Middle School Classroom.
- Takes paraprofessional exam at the end of the pathway.
- Numerous mentors along the way.
- School system offers registered educator apprenticeships.

Registered Apprenticeship and Full Time Paraprofessional

- Full time para in MS Stem Class
- Complete 80 Credit Hours
- Mentorship
- Funding: HOPE, Scholarships, District Grant

Transitions to a Teacher of Record Maintaining Apprenticeship

- Teacher of Record in MS Science Class (last two semesters of program)
- Observations, Practicums, Student Teaching are job embedded
- Ongoing Mentorship
- Funding: HOPE and District Grant

Certified Teacher in MS Science

Rural District #2 High School Pathway Early Childhood Education



High School Pre-Apprentice

- Student complete Early Childhood Education pathway in high school.
- Completes a practicum in a 1st grade classroom.
- Takes paraprofessional exam at the end of the pathway.
- Numerous mentors along the way.
- School system offers registered educator apprenticeships.

Registered Apprenticeship and Part Time Paraprofessional

- Part time para in 2nd grade classroom.
- Complete 60 Credit Hours
- Mentorship
- Funding: HOPE, Scholarships, District Grant

Transitions to a Full Time Paraprofessional

- Full time para in a 1st grade classroom.
- Completes all Observations, Practicums, and Student Teaching
- Ongoing Mentorship
- Funding: HOPE and District Grant

Certified Teacher in K-5

Rural District #3 College and Career Academy Dual Enrollment Model

Pre-Apprentice High School

- Completed EDUC 2110, EDUC 2120, EDUC 2130.
- Dual Enrollment academic Core subjects (30 hours).
- Works 10 hours a week in Special Education Resource Class in a paid work-based learning experience.
- Takes Paraprofessional exam prior to graduation.
- Mentorship
- Facilitated Entry into RAP

Registered Apprenticeship Full Time Paraprofessional

- Full Time para in a special education classroom
- Pursuing Dual Certification in Elementary and SPED
- Completes observations, practicums, and student teaching.
- Ongoing Mentorship
- Funding: HOPE and District Grant

**Elementary Special
Education Teacher
Dual Certified:
Gen Ed and Spec. Ed**



Rural District #4 Adult Pre-Apprenticeship Early Childhood Education

Pre-Apprentice Attending Technical College

- 60 Credits, AAS that leads into direct entry to EPP
- Paid After School Program Position
- Mentorship
- Funding: HOPE Career Grant
- Facilitated Entry into RAP

Registered Apprenticeship Paraprofessional



- Full time paraprofessional in middle school classroom.
- Attends GaPSC-Approved Educator Prep Program
- Completes Observations, Practicums, and Student Teaching
- Ongoing Mentorship
- Funding: HOPE Career Grant and District Funding

**Certified 4-8
Social Studies Teacher**

Making Connections:

Successful Partnerships

- University of North Georgia & surrounding school districts have partnered on an ***Educational Scholars Program***. Students earn EDUC 2110 credit for completion of Teaching as a Profession Pathway and passing the End of Pathway Assessment. They continue taking EDUC 2120 and EDUC 2130 through dual enrollment with UNG.
- Southeast GA high schools are partnering with Coastal Pines Technical College, which offers an Associate of Applied Science in Education that transfers to USG schools to continue for a bachelor's degree in Education.



Recruitment



YouScience provides career recommendations based on a student's natural aptitudes, such as idea generation, numerical reasoning, and spatial visualization.



For an education career, high scores in idea generation, sequential reasoning, and vocabulary might point to a student's aptitude for teaching or curriculum development, while work approach and associative memory could indicate suitability for roles requiring planning and student support.



Free to all school systems in Georgia



Future Georgia Educators Day

Hosted by PAGE and Georgia College & State University



We've planned a great day for education pathway students...



Engaging workshops on teaching topics & college life



College Fair with representatives from colleges across Georgia



FGE Knowledge Bowl



Keynote address from Georgia Teacher of the Year Holly Witcher

Who's invited?

- ✓ FGE chapters
- ✓ Students enrolled in an Education Pathway (ECE or TAP)
- ✓ Any high school students interested in exploring a career in education (must be accompanied by a teacher)

Georgia College & State University

Thursday, February 13, 2025

9:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

\$12 per person

Affiliated FGE chapters—\$10 per person

Registration includes lunch.



Register by January 31 at www.pageinc.org/FGEDay

Payment may be mailed after that date.

Questions? Contact Mary Ruth Ray, PAGE, maryruth@pageinc.org

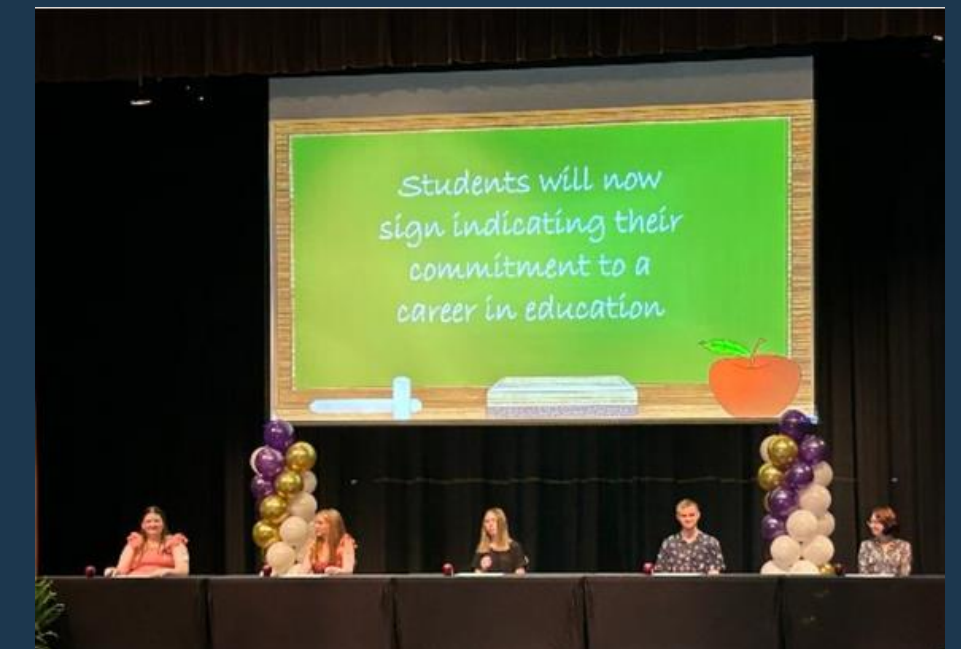
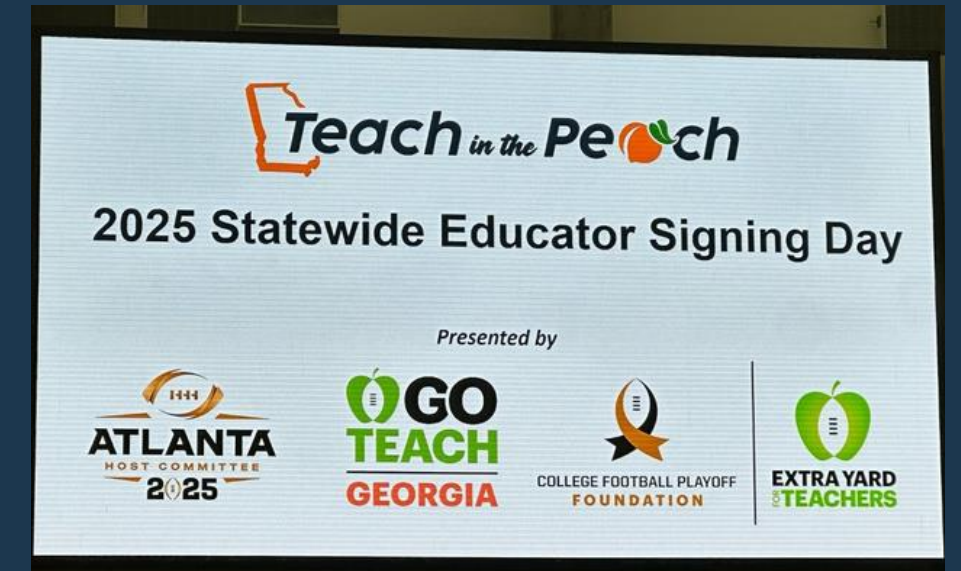


In-person, regional recruitment:

PAGE (Professional Association of Georgia Educators) hosts Future Educator Days across the state.

Recruitment

- Future Educator Signing Day: 1st Tuesday in May for the last 13 years. Events held at high schools across the state
- [Teach in Peach](#) Campaign: Making Georgia the #1 State for Teachers to Teach
- May 2025: First-ever large event held in Atlanta with statewide representation
- May 2026: Statewide in Atlanta with 2 sessions this year.



Program Champions:

Breaking down the unique barriers for each apprentice

A resource for apprentices through open communication.

- Help apprentices navigate the educational ecosystem, including transfers, advising, and test requirements
- Offer regular check-ins, encouragement, and barrier identification
- Support apprentices balancing full-time work, coursework, and family obligations
- Assist apprentices with certification steps, testing questions, and next-semester planning
- Clarify funding possibilities (e.g., when Pell/HOPE covers tuition but P2T may cover other needs)





Home

Teach

Plan

Find

Grow

Live



Georgia Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program

The Georgia Registered Teaching Apprenticeship Program (GaRTAP) offers a new way to become a teacher—by learning on the job while earning a paycheck. Whether you're a high school student or a paraprofessional, GaRTAP helps you take real steps toward a rewarding career in education

[Learn More About GaRTAP](#)

<https://teachinthepeach.org/>

Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent | Georgia Department of Education | Educating Georgia's Future

Stories of Impact



Crystal Cerrillo
Attending: Brewton Parker College
Employer: Montgomery County Schools

"I am thriving academically and proud in my progress. I feel like a stronger teacher-in-training and a role model for my students. I am most looking forward to having my own classroom one day and inspiring the next generation."



Kelly White
Attending: Georgia Southern University
Employer: Candler County Schools

"I'm just super, super thankful and blessed to be given this opportunity, and I can't wait to become a teacher one day."

[Kelly's Video](#)



Jerardy Castro
Attending: Georgia Southwestern University
Employer: Crisp County Schools

"I actually grew up here and went through the Crisp County school system, graduated from here, and I am happy and excited to be back here, giving back to my community." "The mentorship part of this program seems like it's going to be just a perfect way to get what I'm learning from the college and really applying it to the school system here."

Paraprofessional to Teacher Apprenticeship Pathway

Georgia Registered Teaching Apprenticeship Program

Resource Links

[Front/Back
Infographic](#)

[Pre-Apprenticeship
Brochure](#)

[Aspiring Apprentice
Form](#)



[Program
One Pager](#)

[Apprenticeship
Program Roadmap](#)

[Competency
Tool](#)

Office of Rural Education and Innovation

Georgia Registered Teaching Apprenticeship Program



Laura Ergle, Ed.D.

College and Career Readiness Specialist

Pre-Apprenticeship Coordinator

laura.ergle@doe.k12.ga.us



Heather Finley, Ed.S.

Teacher Recruitment and Retention Specialist

Apprenticeship Program Coordinator

Heather.Finley@doe.k12.ga.us