

New Mexico's Registered Teacher Apprenticeship: A High-Quality, State-Sponsored Model

New Mexico's well-documented statewide teacher residency initiative has positioned the state as a national leader in expanding access to high-quality, practice-based teacher preparation. Since establishing legislative support for teacher residency through House Bill 13 in 2022, the state has invested in building the infrastructure needed to ensure aspiring educators can complete year-long, clinically rich preparation before becoming teachers of record.

Building on that foundation, New Mexico has expanded its vision beyond teacher residency alone to develop a connected earn-while-you-learn educator workforce system. Rather than creating a new preparation model, the state is integrating two Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs)—an Educator Assistant (EA) apprenticeship leading to EA licensure and a Registered Teacher Residency Apprenticeship leading to initial teacher licensure—into its existing educator preparation system.

Supported through an Apprenticeships Building America 2 (ABA2) grant, New Mexico is designing and piloting a statewide apprenticeship infrastructure that connects multiple entry points into teaching, beginning with high school pre-apprenticeships, expanding Grow-Your-Own opportunities, strengthening pathways for educational assistants and career changers, and increasing access to high-quality preparation in shortage areas.

Teacher residency defines the quality of preparation. Registered Apprenticeship provides the workforce mechanism that expands access to, sustains, and scales that quality. Together, they create an integrated educator workforce strategy that aligns education and workforce systems around a shared definition of high-quality preparation.

New Mexico's approach differs from many other state apprenticeship models through several key design features:

State Sponsorship

The New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) serves as the statewide apprenticeship sponsor, providing a unified vision for educator preparation that promotes consistency, equity, and efficiency while reducing administrative barriers for educator preparation programs (EPPs), school districts, and workforce partners.

Integration with Teacher Residency

New Mexico's existing teacher residency infrastructure provides the foundation for delivering high-quality preparation within a Registered Teacher Residency Apprenticeship.

The state intentionally views teacher residency and Registered Apprenticeship as complementary systems with distinct roles.

- Teacher residency defines quality. Decades of research have established the core elements of high-quality preparation, including strong partnerships, coherent pre-service curriculum, year-long clinical practice, and accomplished mentor teachers.
- Registered Apprenticeship provides the workforce mechanism that makes this evidence-based model more accessible, financially sustainable, and scalable by connecting employment, earn-while-you-learn opportunities, workforce investment, and competency-based progression.

Rather than replacing or redefining teacher residency, Registered Apprenticeship strengthens it by enabling more aspiring educators to access and complete high-quality, practice-based preparation while supporting the long-term workforce needs of school districts and states.

NMPED State Sponsor Role

In recent years, teacher apprenticeship models varying in structure, consistency, and quality have been developed and registered across the country. To address these challenges, New Mexico developed a **state-sponsored Registered Teacher Apprenticeship** model designed to advance two core goals:

1. **Equity** – Every aspiring teacher deserves access to high-quality, practice-based preparation, regardless of the EPP they attend, the district they serve, or the mentor teacher who supports them.
2. **Cost and Efficiency** – Creating individual apprenticeship programs at the district level can be administratively burdensome and costly. A state-led model reduces this complexity and allows districts to focus their efforts on support and implementation, not bureaucracy.

The centralized, state-sponsored model ensures that:

- All students are taught by well-prepared teachers who meet the state's highest standards;
- Districts and preparation programs can join a statewide apprenticeship consortium, strengthening coherence and collaboration; and
- Pre-service candidates have equitable access to high-quality programs and funding through an aligned educator preparation system.

Importantly, the model supports **multiple entry points**, allowing candidates to begin their licensure journey from different stages—each pathway leading to rigorous, practice-based residency preparation prior to licensure.

Core Design Principles

New Mexico's educator workforce strategy is grounded in a shared vision that teacher residency defines the standard for high-quality educator preparation, while Registered Apprenticeship provides the workforce mechanism that expands access to, sustains, and scales that quality. This vision is realized through strong partnerships among educator preparation programs, local education agencies, workforce partners, labor organizations, and the New Mexico Public Education Department.

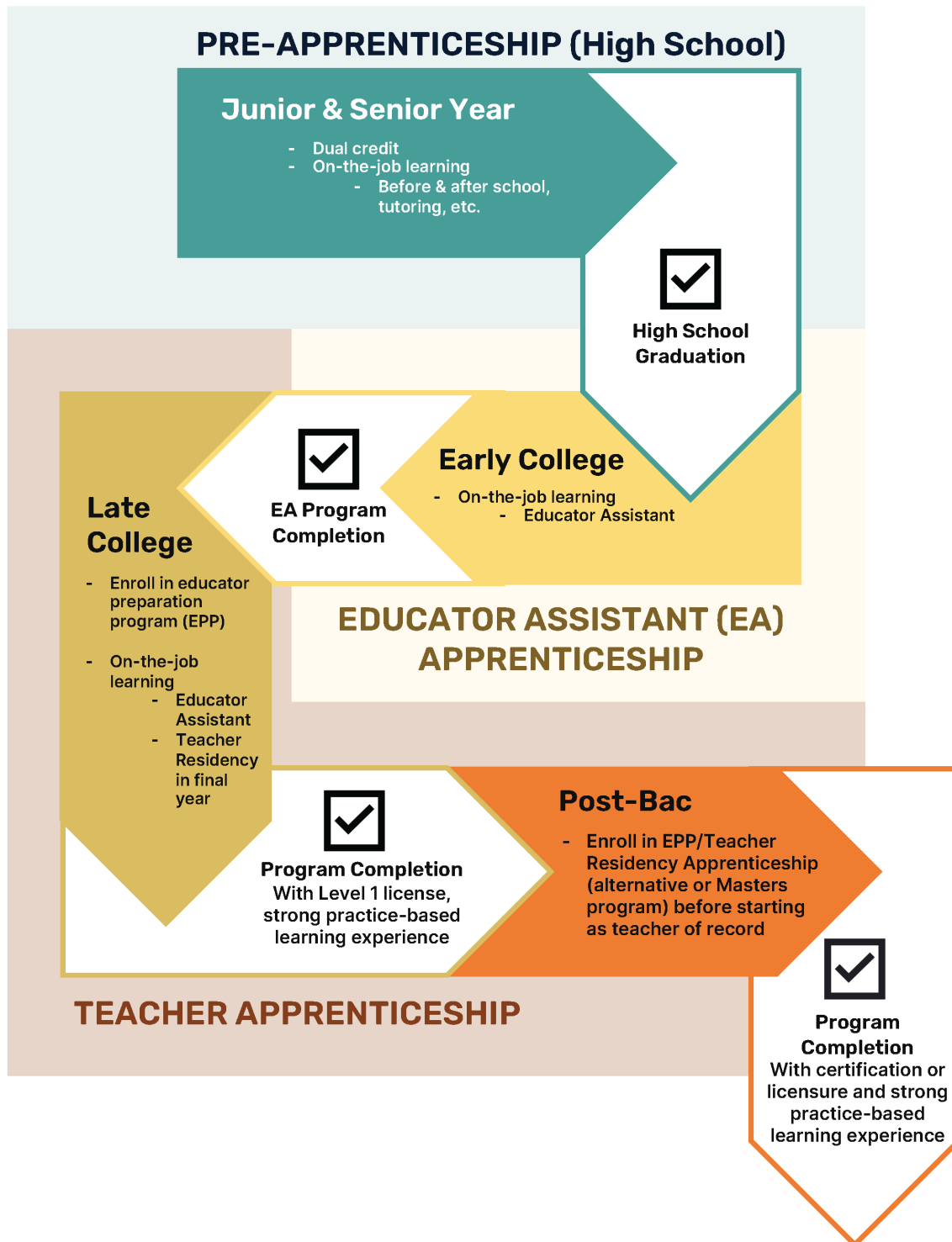
Together, these partners are building an educator workforce system that:

- Centers quality by ensuring every aspiring educator has access to evidence-based, practice-focused teacher residency experiences before becoming a teacher of record.
- Creates multiple on-ramps into one high-quality pathway by connecting secondary education, dual enrollment, pre-apprenticeships, educational assistant roles, career changers, and teacher residency into a cohesive, articulated educator workforce system.
- Recruits and prepares educators locally to strengthen workforce diversity, increase retention, and build sustainable staffing pipelines that reflect the communities they serve.
- Aligns education and workforce systems by braiding and blending federal, state, local, and workforce investments to create financially sustainable earn-while-you-learn pathways.
- Improves student outcomes by investing in preparation models grounded in evidence-based instructional practice, strong mentoring, competency development, and year-long clinical experiences.



By aligning teacher residency and Registered Apprenticeship around a shared definition of quality, New Mexico is building an educator workforce system that is more accessible, more sustainable, and better positioned to meet the long-term staffing needs of schools while ensuring every aspiring teacher is prepared for success from their first day in the classroom.

New Mexico Apprenticeship Structures



Visual produced by Prepared To Teach for NMPED.



About the Educator Assistant Apprenticeship

Grow-Your Own Workforce Development

HIGH SCHOOL

Grades 11-12 | Pre-Apprenticeship (Dual Credit & On-the-Job Learning)

Students enroll in dual credit courses and participate in education-focused high school programs while working with youth in tutoring, before/after school programs, or other qualifying on-the-job learning programs. Students complete:

- ▶ Dual credit foundational education coursework
- ▶ College readiness coursework aligned to licensure requirements
- ▶ On-the-job learning hours of structured, supervised field experience in NM public schools (paid tutoring, after school programs, etc.) *Additional hours may be acquired through summer employment opportunities.
- ▶ Transition planning into Educator Assistant role

Outcome upon completion:

- ✓ High school diploma
- ✓ College credit (as much as 24-30 college credits)
- ✓ Documented clinical hours
- ✓ Entry into an Educator Assistant (EA) role that supports college & career progress in education

EARLY COLLEGE

Years 1-2 of College | Educator Assistant Registered Apprenticeship (EARA)

Candidates apply to the State Sponsored Educator Assistant Registered Apprenticeship (EARA). Qualifications include obtaining an EA license and being hired by a district as an Educator Assistant. Candidates complete:

- ▶ 60 credit hours of foundational college coursework
- ▶ Time in paid instructional support roles as EAs or supplemental EAs (Educator Fellows)
- ▶ Real world, practice-based experience with mentorship from a lead teacher
- ▶ WIOA and workforce funding applications, receiving funding as eligible

Outcome upon completion:

- ✓ AA degree or 60 credits toward BA/BS in Education
- ✓ Accumulated supervised clinical hours
- ✓ DOL Registered Apprenticeship Credential
- ✓ Level 3 Educator Assistant License and option to apply for and transition into RTAP



About the Registered Teaching Apprenticeship (RTAP)

Teacher Workforce Development within High-Priority Licensure Areas

JUNIOR YEAR OF COLLEGE

Grow-Your-Own (GYO) continuation from Education Assistant Registered Apprenticeship (EARA), Resident Apprenticeship OR outside entry (i.e. not working as an EA already)

Candidates interested in pursuing high-priority licensure areas enroll in an approved Educator Preparation Program (EPP) with teacher residency partnerships. Candidates formally apply for the **Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program** in partnership with the Public Education Department (PED), EPPs, and Local Education Agencies (LEAs). Selected candidates will:

- ▶ Declare teaching major and area of licensure that meets district workforce need
- ▶ Complete Related Instruction (RI) junior year education coursework
- ▶ Serve in paid instructional support roles as EAs
- ▶ Complete 2000 hours of on-the-job learning aligned to INTASC Competency Standards
- ▶ Receive mentorship from lead teacher and real world, practice-based experience, gradually increasing responsibilities within classrooms aligned to INTASC competencies

SENIOR YEAR OF COLLEGE

Teacher residency in High-Priority Licensure Areas

Candidates pursuing high-priority licensure areas enroll in a NMPED approved EPP with developed residency partnerships. Candidates not already employed as apprentices formally apply for the **Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program** in partnership with PED, EPPs, and LEAs. Selected candidates will:

- ▶ Complete Related Instruction (RI) senior year or post-bac education coursework
- ▶ Complete a paid year-long residency serving in a co-teaching role (apprentice wage scale)
*Access to state-appropriated funding for residents
- ▶ Receive intensive mentorship & co-teach with a Level 2-3 teacher
- ▶ Participate in data tracking and competency documentation by both EPP and LEA
- ▶ Complete Praxis and licensure assessments

Outcome upon completion:

- ✓ Bachelor's Degree
- ✓ Full NM Level 1 Licensure or ALT Licensure
- ✓ DOL Registered Apprenticeship Credential
- ✓ Practice-ready teacher with rich clinical experience

POST-BACHELORS or CAREER CHANGER

Teacher residency in High-Priority Licensure Areas

Candidates pursuing high-priority licensure areas enroll in a NMPED approved post-bac certificate or master's EPP with developed residency partnerships. Candidates not already employed as apprentices formally apply for the **Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program** in partnership with PED, EPPs, and LEAs. Selected candidates will:



- ▶ Complete Related Instruction (RI) senior year or post-bac education coursework
- ▶ Complete a paid year-long residency serving in a co-teaching role (apprentice wage scale)
*Access to state-appropriated funding for residents
- ▶ Receive intensive mentorship & co-teach with a Level 2-3 teacher
- ▶ Complete 2000 on-the-job learning hours aligned to residency guidance and INTASC standard competencies
- ▶ Participate in data tracking and competency documentation by both EPP and LEA
- ▶ Complete praxis and licensure assessments

Outcome upon completion:

- ✓ Post-Bachelors Certification or Masters
- ✓ Full NM Level 1 Licensure or ALT Licensure
- ✓ DOL Registered Apprenticeship Credential
- ✓ Practice-ready teacher with rich clinical experience

