

A CO-PUBLISHED PRACTITIONER PLAYBOOK

Building & Scaling Teacher Apprenticeships

A Playbook for Educator Preparation
Programs (EPPs)

Seven lessons, with the tools, templates, and CAEP-alignment
guidance to run them.

Building & Scaling Teacher Apprenticeships

A Playbook for Educator Preparation Programs
(EPPs)

This playbook is written with Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) accredited providers in mind. Throughout this playbook, connections to CAEP Standards are embedded to support alignment, evidence development, and program improvement.

Whether you're a dean, department/faculty lead, clinical director, or program designer — this was built with you in mind.

PUBLISHED BY

Craft Education, in partnership with the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation.
Edition One, 2026.

Contents

FRONT MATTER

Welcome, Framing & How to Use This Playbook	v
Purpose of the Playbook	vi
How to Use This Playbook · CAEP Alignment	vii
How This Playbook is Different	ix
Learning Goals · Big Questions	xi
Glossary of Key Terms	xiii
About the Lessons	xv
Readiness Reflection: Where Are You Now?	xvi
Quick Start Checklist · Last Note Before You Begin	xix

LESSONS

01	Why Teacher Apprenticeship? Why Now for EPPs?	1
	1.1 Apprenticeship: Myth vs. Reality	1.2 Pressure Points & Opportunities Reflection
	1.3 Where You Already Align (Program Mapping)	1.4 Reflection Prompt
02	Apprenticeship 101 for Educator Preparation	13
	2.1 What Makes a Registered Apprenticeship (RAP)?	2.2 Who Does What? Roles & Responsibilities
	2.3 What EPPs Do NOT Have to Do	2.4 Entry Points EPPs
	2.5 Reflection	
03	Designing Programs Within EPP Structures	34
	3.1 Course to Practice Alignment (RTI)	3.2 From Coursework to Real-World, Real-Time Application
	3.3 Clinical Practice as OJL	3.4 Program Structure: Scheduling, Modality & Models
	3.5 Faculty Roles in an Apprenticeship Model	3.6 Reflection Prompt: Where Do We Start Designing?

04	Apprenticeship Standards & Sponsorship (Optional Deep Dive)	56
	4.1 Understanding Apprenticeship Competencies & Standards	
	4.2 Aligning Coursework to Competencies	
	4.3 RAP Registration & Appendix A	
	4.4 Understanding Sponsorship & Your Role	
05	Partnerships, Roles & Implementation Realities	72
	5.1 From Placement to Partnership	
	5.2 Roles in Practice: Who Owns What	
	5.3 What Strong Partnerships Actually Look Like	
	5.4 Implementation Realities & Common Challenges	
	5.5 Reflection Prompt: Strengthening Our Partnerships	
06	Funding, Data & Sustainability	85
	6.1 Understanding the Funding Landscape	
	6.2 Braiding Funding for Real Programs	
	6.2a Reframing Apprenticeship as a Revenue-Positive Model	
	6.3 What Data Actually Matters	
	6.4 From Data to Evidence	
	6.5 Designing for Sustainability	
	6.6 Reflection Prompt: Making This Work Long-Term	
07	Action Planning & Next Steps	105
	Step 1 Define Your Focus Area	
	Step 2 Use the 90-Day Planning Template	
	Step 3 Build Your Team	
	Step 4 Identify Support You Still Need	

BACK MATTER

Supplemental Templates	109
FAQs & Troubleshooting	113
Resources	123
Appendix — CAEP Alignment Crosswalk	130
About the Publishers · Citation	133

Welcome, Framing & How to Use This Playbook

Welcome to Craft Education's Playbook for Building & Scaling Teacher Apprenticeships in Educator Preparation. This playbook is your practical guide to turning big ideas into real, working programs inside your institution. Whether you're a dean, department/faculty lead, clinical director, or program designer — this was built with you in mind.

You don't need to start from scratch. In fact, you're likely closer than you think.

Many educator preparation programs are already doing pieces of this work through clinical practice, partnerships, and coursework. Apprenticeship simply helps connect, strengthen, and sustain what's already in motion.

This isn't just a playbook. It's a tool for building programs that are more accessible, more aligned to workforce needs, and more sustainable over time. So with that, let's build.

Purpose of the Playbook

This playbook is designed to support Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) at any stage of the journey:

- Exploring teacher apprenticeships conceptually
- Partnering with districts or Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs)
- Serving as a Related Technical Instruction (RTI) provider
- Designing or launching apprenticeship-aligned degree pathways

Use this playbook to:

- Understand how teacher apprenticeships fit within educator preparation
- Identify where your current program already aligns
- Design or refine apprenticeship pathways within your institution
- Strengthen partnerships with districts and employers
- Build actionable plans for piloting or scaling programs

This is not a policy document. It's a working guide for teams ready to move from idea to implementation. Let's get started!

How CAEP Alignment Is Built In

This playbook is written with Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) accredited providers in mind. Throughout this playbook, connections to CAEP Standards are embedded to support alignment, evidence development, and program improvement.

* CAEP ALIGNMENT

Why This Matters for CAEP-Accredited Providers

Teacher apprenticeship is not separate from accreditation. In many cases, it strengthens it. This playbook is intentionally designed to support alignment with key CAEP standards, particularly:

Standard R1: Content and Pedagogical Knowledge

Strengthening candidates' ability to apply content and pedagogical knowledge in real-world settings through competency-based, job-embedded practice

Standard R2: Clinical Partnerships & Practice

Strengthening co-designed, mutually beneficial partnerships with districts and employers

Standard R3: Candidate Recruitment, Progression, and Support

Expanding access through job-embedded pathways and supporting candidate development through structured, progressive clinical experiences

Standard R5: Quality Assurance & Continuous Improvement

Building clearer data pipelines that connect coursework, clinical practice, and candidate outcomes

Apprenticeship-aligned pathways are not held to different standards than traditional educator preparation programs. They are expected to meet the same CAEP standards and provide the same types of evidence. What changes is not the expectation — but the opportunity.

Because candidates are learning in real-time, job-embedded settings, apprenticeship models can make evidence of candidate growth, clinical practice, and program impact more visible, continuous, and actionable.

Programs can build on existing quality assurance systems and documentation structures to support apprenticeship pathways, rather than creating entirely new systems. In many cases, apprenticeship models extend and make more visible the systems programs already use to monitor candidate development and program effectiveness.

A Note on Context

This playbook assumes the structures common to CAEP-accredited Educator Preparation Programs, including:

- institutional governance and faculty review processes
- alignment to licensure requirements
- and ongoing accreditation expectations

The goal is not to add new layers of work, but to help make existing work:

01 **more connected**

02 **more measurable**

03 **and more aligned to both workforce
needs and accreditation priorities**

Throughout this playbook, you'll see opportunities to connect design decisions directly to accreditation expectations. Additional tools and alignment supports are included in the appendix and can be expanded as your program evolves.

How This Playbook is Different

If you've used apprenticeship or workforce playbooks before, you'll notice a few key differences here.

This playbook is designed specifically for EPPs, which means it accounts for:

- Credit-bearing coursework and degree structures
- Faculty roles and governance processes
- Licensure requirements and state approval systems
- Institutional timelines and decision-making realities
- Long-term sustainability beyond grant cycles

KEY TAKEAWAY

This isn't about layering something new on top of your program. It's about integrating apprenticeship into the systems you already operate within.

How to Use This Playbook

This playbook is designed to be flexible, practical, and team-oriented.

You can:

- Start from the beginning or jump to the section you need most
- Work through it as a leadership team or program group
- Use it during planning sessions, retreats, or working meetings
- Revisit sections as your program evolves

What You'll Find Inside:

- Quick Recaps & Big Ideas to ground your understanding
- Reflection Prompts to connect ideas to your context
- Planning Tools & Templates to help you build
- Accreditation Lens Callouts to support alignment and evidence

This is not meant to be completed in one sitting. It's meant to be used, marked up, revisited, and adapted. The goal isn't perfection. The goal is progress.

■ A NOTE ON LINKS & TOOLS

If you're using the digital version, hyperlinks are included throughout for deeper dives, templates, and external resources. If you're using a printed version, most tools are mirrored in the [Resource](#) section or come with short links you can type in manually.

Learning Goals: What This Playbook Helps You Do

This playbook is designed to help Educator Preparation Programs move from exploration to implementation, with clarity, confidence, and a plan.

By the time you work through this playbook, you'll be able to:

-
- 01 ☐ Understand how teacher apprenticeships fit within educator preparation, licensure, and institutional systems
 - 02 ☐ Identify where your current program already aligns to apprenticeship components
 - 03 ☐ Design or refine an apprenticeship-aligned pathway within your EPP
 - 04 ☐ Build stronger, more intentional partnerships with districts and employer partners
 - 05 ☐ Align program design decisions to accreditation expectations, including those from Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation and Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation
 - 06 ☐ Navigate key considerations like clinical practice, faculty roles, scheduling, and funding
 - 07 ☐ Define what data matters and how to use it for improvement and accountability
 - 08 ☐ Develop a realistic pilot plan that fits your institution's structure and timeline
-

Big Questions This Playbook Helps You Answer

As you move through the lessons, you'll come back to a few core questions:

- 1 How close is our current EPP model to apprenticeship already?
- 2 What would need to change, and what can stay the same?
- 3 How do we design this in a way that works for faculty, candidates, and partners?
- 4 How do we align this work to accreditation without creating more burden?
- 5 What is the smartest, most realistic way for us to start?

■ START HERE: A QUICK REFLECTION

Before moving forward, take a moment to ground your starting point.

Where is your EPP today in relation to apprenticeship?

What work are you already doing that aligns?

Where are you feeling pressure or opportunity?

What would success look like if this worked?

Use the space below to capture initial thoughts:

Glossary of Key Terms

A

Accreditation Standards

Quality expectations set by bodies such as CAEP that EPPs must meet to maintain program approval and recognition.

Apprentice

An individual enrolled in a RAP, receiving paid training on the job and classroom instruction to build industry skills.

ATR (Apprenticeship Training Representative)

A Department of Labor employee responsible for approving apprentices in RAPIDS and auditing sponsor programs. Each state has at least one ATR, and many states have multiple ATRs responsible for regions.

C

CBE (Competency-Based Education) or Competency-Based Model

A learning model that focuses on demonstrated skill mastery rather than seat time or course completion.

Clinical Partnerships (CAEP Standard R2)

Collaborative relationships between EPPs and school partners that support candidate development and shared accountability.

Clinical Practice

Structured, supervised teaching experiences required for licensure. In apprenticeship models, this expands to include paid, job-embedded roles.

C CONTINUED

CPL (Credit for Prior Learning)

A way to award college credit for skills or knowledge gained through work, certifications, or life experience.

Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) in EPPs

The process of awarding academic credit for demonstrated competencies gained through work, certifications, or prior experience, with additional guardrails due to licensure requirements.

F

Faculty of Record

The EPP faculty member responsible for course instruction, assessment, and academic integrity within credit-bearing coursework.

J

Journeyworker (or Journeyperson)

A fully trained and experienced worker who has completed an apprenticeship and is considered competent in their occupation. In Registered Apprenticeship Programs, journeyworkers often supervise, train, and evaluate apprentices on the job. In educator preparation, this role is most similar to a mentor teacher or experienced classroom educator supporting a candidate's clinical practice, though responsibilities and formal expectations may vary.

L

Licensure Requirements

State-defined criteria candidates must meet to become certified teachers, including coursework, assessments, and clinical experience.

M

Mentor Teacher

An experienced educator who supports the apprentice's on-the-job learning, providing coaching, feedback, and modeling.

O

OA (Office of Apprenticeship)

A U.S. Department of Labor office that manages apprenticeship registration in states without an SAA.

OJL (On-the-Job Learning) or OJT (On-the-Job Training)

Supervised, hands-on training at a real workplace; must total at least 2,000 hours in a RAP.

P

Pre-Apprenticeship

A structured pathway that prepares students for entry into a RAP. Must include work exposure, aligned curriculum, and a direct link to a RAP sponsor.

Program Impact (CAEP Standard R4)

Evidence that program completers positively impact P–12 student learning and development.

R

RAP (Registered Apprenticeship Program)

A formal training program approved by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) or a State Apprenticeship Agency (SAA), combining paid on-the-job training with related technical instruction.

R CONTINUED

RAP Sponsor

The entity responsible for the administration and operation of the RAP. This can be an employer, a joint labor-management organization, an educational institution, or a third-party intermediary.

RTI (Related Technical Instruction)

The educational or classroom component of a RAP that supports the technical skills needed for the occupation. It can be delivered in person or online and is often fulfilled by coursework or structured instruction.

S

SAA (State Apprenticeship Agency)

A state-level body that registers and oversees apprenticeship programs in SAA states.

Stackable Credentials

A series of short-term credentials that build toward a larger certification, degree, or license.

T

Teacher of Record

An individual officially responsible for instruction in a classroom. Policies vary by state regarding when apprentices can serve in this role.

Time-Based Model

A model in which apprentices complete a predetermined number of hours of OJT and RTI (e.g., 2,000 OJT hours plus 144 RTI hours per year).

W

Wage Progression

A structured increase in wages as apprentices gain skills or complete program benchmarks, often tied to a percentage of the journeyworker rate.

About the Lessons

This playbook is organized around a series of lessons designed to guide Educator Preparation Programs from early exploration to program design and implementation. Each lesson builds on the one before it, moving from understanding to action.

You'll notice a consistent structure throughout:

- Overview & Big Ideas to ground your understanding
- Reflection Prompts to connect concepts to your institution
- Planning Tools & Templates to help you build in real time
- Accreditation Lens Callouts to support alignment and evidence-building

Rather than working through content passively, we're aiming to allow you to building something as you go.

LESSON	SECTION TITLE	CORE TOOLS & FEATURES
Lesson 1	Why Teacher Apprenticeship? Why Now for EPPs?	Understanding the urgency, opportunity, and role of EPPs in leading this work
Lesson 2	Apprenticeship 101 for Educator Preparation	Breaking down how Registered Apprenticeship works, specifically in teacher preparation
Lesson 3	Designing Programs Within EPP Structures	Translating apprenticeship into coursework, clinical practice, and program models
Lesson 4	Apprenticeship Standards & Sponsorship (Optional Deep Dive)	Understanding competencies and standards, aligning coursework, RAP registration basics, and sponsorship options
Lesson 5	Partnerships, Roles & Implementation Realities	Clarifying roles across EPPs, districts, mentors, and partners
Lesson 6	Funding, Data & Sustainability	Making programs viable, measurable, and scalable
Lesson 7	Action Planning & Next Steps	Turning ideas into action through a realistic pilot plan

Readiness Reflection: Where Are You Now?

Before we dive into Lesson 1, take a few minutes to reflect on where your Educator Preparation Program currently stands. This isn't a test. There are no right or wrong answers. This is simply a starting point, a way to ground your thinking, track your progress, and identify the opportunities that matter most for your institution, candidates, and partners.

PART 1 Apprenticeship Awareness

How familiar are you with teacher apprenticeship programs?

- ☐ I'm brand new to this concept
 - ☐ I've heard of apprenticeships, but haven't explored them in teacher preparation
 - ☐ I've partnered with a district or program connected to apprenticeship
 - ☐ I help lead or manage an apprenticeship-aligned or job-embedded program
-

PART 2 Program Alignment

Which of these components already exist within your EPP?

(Check all that apply)

- ☐ Structured clinical practice or student teaching
- ☐ Strong partnerships with districts or school systems
- ☐ Candidates working in schools (paraprofessionals, residents, etc.)
- ☐ Coursework aligned to real classroom practice
- ☐ Mentorship or coaching for candidates in the field
- ☐ Performance-based assessments or competency-aligned evaluations
- ☐ Stackable credentials or embedded certifications
- ☐ Credit for prior learning or recognition of experience
- ☐ None of the above yet... but we're exploring

PART 3 Partnerships & Support

Do you currently collaborate with any of the following?

- ☐ School districts or LEAs
 - ☐ State Department of Education or licensure body
 - ☐ Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation
 - ☐ Workforce boards or apprenticeship intermediaries
 - ☐ Community colleges or transfer partners
 - ☐ Employer partners connected to educator pipelines
 - ☐ We're still identifying the right partners
-

PART 4 Institutional Readiness

How would you describe your current environment?

- ☐ Strong leadership support for innovation
- ☐ Faculty openness to new models
- ☐ Clear understanding of accreditation implications
- ☐ Flexible program structures (scheduling, modality, delivery)
- ☐ Established processes for program approval or redesign
- ☐ We anticipate challenges in one or more of these areas

PART 5 What Feels Most Urgent Right Now?

Reflect on what's top of mind for your team.

What challenges is your EPP currently facing that apprenticeship could help address?

(Examples: enrollment decline, candidate access, clinical placement constraints, district needs, funding...)

What questions do you have as you begin this work?

What is one goal you hope to accomplish by using this playbook?

Quick Start Checklist

Before You Dive In

Use this checklist to set your team up for success as you work through this playbook.

This isn't required — but it will make the process smoother, more grounded, and more productive.

TASK	WHY IT MATTERS
☐ Preview the lessons or scan the table of contents	Helps you understand the flow and where to focus based on your needs
☐ Decide how you'll capture notes	Use whatever format fits your style. Highlight, doodle, or duplicate sections in Docs, Sheets, etc.
☐ Skim the glossary	Terms like RAP, RTI, and OJL come up often. Knowing them now builds confidence later.
☐ Complete the Readiness Reflection	Gives you a baseline and helps identify your starting point
☐ Gather key program materials	Course lists, clinical models, partnership agreements, or accreditation reports can help you plan more concretely
☐ Identify your core team	This work is not meant to be done alone. Consider who should be involved early
☐ Understand your institutional approval and accreditation context	Many apprenticeship-aligned shifts can be implemented within existing program structures, especially when they strengthen clinical practice, partnerships, and candidate outcomes. This step helps you identify what <i>actually</i> requires formal approval versus what can be adapted or piloted within your current model.
☐ Explore existing apprenticeship or workforce efforts in your state	Use Apprenticeship.gov or your State Apprenticeship Agency to understand what already exists

QUICK START CHECKLIST

■ NOTE

Not all apprenticeship-aligned changes require new program approval. In many cases, EPPs begin by:

- strengthening existing clinical experiences
- formalizing district partnerships
- aligning coursework more intentionally to on-the-job learning

Start by exploring what's possible within your current structure, then determine where formal changes are truly needed.

Last Note Before You Begin

Before You Dive In

You do not need to have everything figured out before you start. You do not need perfect alignment across your institution. You do not need full faculty or leadership consensus yet. Most programs begin with questions — not answers.

This playbook is designed to help you:

- make sense of what's possible
- identify what's already in place
- and take the next right step forward

Don't forget that the goal isn't to build everything at once. It's to build something real, and build more from there.

Why Teacher Apprenticeship? Why Now for EPPs?

Teacher apprenticeship is not a replacement for educator preparation in any previous or concurrent form. It is an expansion of access, alignment, and sustainability, particularly for candidates already working in schools.

Overview

This first lesson lays the foundation by exploring the shifting landscape of educator preparation, the growing demand for job-embedded pathways, and the opportunity for Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) to lead this work.

THE BIG IDEA

EPPs are already doing much of what apprenticeship requires. Apprenticeship helps connect, strengthen, and sustain those efforts within a more coherent and workforce-aligned model.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this section, you'll be able to:

- Understand the current pressures shaping educator preparation and why apprenticeship is gaining traction
- Recognize how apprenticeship expands rather than replaces traditional EPP models
- Identify where your existing program already aligns to apprenticeship components
- Articulate the role EPPs can play in leading apprenticeship-aligned pathways

TOOLS & PROMPTS

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 1.1 | Apprenticeship in EPPs: Myth vs. Reality |
| 1.2 | Pressure Points & Opportunities Reflection |
| 1.3 | Where You Already Align (Program Mapping) |
| 1.4 | Reflection Prompt: Leading or Reacting? |
-

1.1

TOOL

Apprenticeship: Myth vs. Reality

Use this chart to unpack common assumptions about teacher apprenticeship and how they compare to what many EPPs are already doing.

❑ MYTH	✓ REALITY
Apprenticeship is only for trades or non-degree pathways	Apprenticeship models now exist across professions, including teaching, and can be fully aligned to degree programs
Apprenticeship replaces traditional educator preparation	Apprenticeship strengthens educator preparation by connecting coursework, clinical practice, and employment
EPPs would need to redesign everything to participate	Many EPPs already have core components in place — apprenticeship helps connect and formalize them
Apprenticeship lowers rigor	Apprenticeship can increase rigor by tying learning directly to real classroom practice and candidate impact
This requires entirely new program approval	Many apprenticeship-aligned shifts can be implemented within existing structures, especially when enhancing clinical practice and partnerships

■ TRY THIS

Circle a myth you’ve heard (or personally wondered about). How would you explain the reality to a faculty member, dean, or district partner?

Jot down your quick talking point here:

■ NOTE — YOU MIGHT BE SEEING THIS ALREADY

If your institution is discussing enrollment decline, clinical redesign, or district partnerships — you’re already in this conversation.

1.2

TOOL

Pressure Points & Opportunities Reflection

Educator preparation is at a unique moment. Across the field, long-standing structures are being challenged by new realities, and new possibilities are emerging at the same time. This is what makes this moment both complex and full of opportunity.

What’s Changing

Several shifts are happening at once:

01**Enrollment patterns are shifting.**

Traditional undergraduate pathways are declining in many regions, while adult learners and career changers are seeking more flexible, work-connected options

02**The cost of becoming a teacher is under scrutiny.**

Unpaid clinical models create financial barriers that limit who can enter and complete preparation programs

03**District needs are becoming more urgent and visible.**

Schools are facing staffing shortages and are increasingly building their own pipelines through Grow Your Own and job-embedded models.

04**Alternative pathways are expanding quickly.**

Many offer speed and income — but not always the depth or long-term support that EPPs provide

What This Creates

When these shifts intersect, they create a different kind of opportunity:

- Candidates are already working in schools and need pathways that meet them where they are
- Districts are actively seeking partners, not just graduates
- Funding and policy conversations are increasingly aligned to workforce outcomes
- Clinical practice is being reimagined as something that can be paid, continuous, and integrated

This is where apprenticeship becomes relevant. Not as something new, but as a way to connect what already exists into a more coherent system.

■ REFLECT

Many traditional models require candidates to step away from paid work to complete clinical experiences. In practice, this often means candidates are:

- taking on additional debt
- reducing income
- or delaying completion

Is your current clinical model, in part, being subsidized by student debt?

What might it look like to design a model where candidates can earn while they learn?

Jot notes

What This Means for EPPs

For Educator Preparation Programs, these shifts are not abstract. They are already shaping enrollment, partnerships, and long-term program viability.

In many regions:

- districts are building Grow Your Own pathways without formal EPP leadership
- candidates are choosing faster, paid alternatives
- and traditional undergraduate pipelines are shrinking

This creates a critical question:

Will EPPs lead the design of these pathways — or adapt to models built without them?

Apprenticeship offers a way for EPPs to remain central by:

- aligning to workforce needs
- strengthening partnerships
- and redesigning pathways in ways that are both accessible and rigorous

Reflect on Your Context

WHERE ARE YOU CURRENTLY FEELING PRESSURE? <i>(Check all that apply)</i>	WHERE DO YOU SEE OPPORTUNITY? <i>(Check all that apply)</i>
☐ Declining enrollment in traditional pathways ☐ Candidates unable to afford unpaid clinical experiences ☐ District staffing shortages and urgent hiring needs ☐ Competition from alternative certification programs ☐ Difficulty securing consistent, high-quality placements ☐ Misalignment between coursework and classroom realities	☐ Candidates already working in schools (paraprofessionals, aides, long-term subs) ☐ Strong district partnerships that could be expanded ☐ Existing clinical or residency models ☐ Faculty interest in innovation or redesign ☐ State or regional interest in Grow Your Own pathways

■ REFLECT

What stands out to you? Where do pressure and opportunity overlap? That overlap is often where apprenticeship-aligned work begins.

Initial thoughts or leads:

1.3

TOOL

Where You Already Align (Program Mapping)

Many Educator Preparation Programs are closer to apprenticeship than they might think. That's because apprenticeship isn't built from entirely new components — it's built by **connecting and strengthening** elements that already exist in strong preparation programs.

In many EPPs today:

- Candidates are already spending extended time in classrooms through clinical practice or student teaching
- Coursework is already designed to connect theory to real instructional practice
- Mentor teachers and supervisors are already guiding candidates in real settings
- Partnerships with districts already exist, even if they are not yet structured for shared design or long-term pipelines

What's often missing isn't the work itself. It's the alignment, continuity, and structure that connects these pieces into a coherent pathway. Apprenticeship helps bring those elements together so that:

01 **learning is more clearly tied to practice**

02 **partnerships are more intentional**

03 **and candidate experiences are more connected over time**

Map What You Already Have

Use this quick tool to identify where your current program already aligns.

APPRENTICESHIP COMPONENT	DO YOU ALREADY HAVE THIS?
Structured clinical practice in real classrooms	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure
Partnerships with districts or school systems	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure
Candidates working in schools while completing coursework	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure
Mentorship or coaching during clinical experiences	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure
Performance-based or competency-aligned assessments	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure
Coursework connected to classroom application	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Take a Look

Where did you mark “Yes”? Those are not small things. They are the foundation of an apprenticeship-aligned model.

REFLECT

What surprised you as you worked through this? Where are you further along than you expected? Where are the gaps that feel most important to address?

Jot reflections here:

TRANSLATION

In Registered Apprenticeship, these elements are often formalized and named:

Clinical practice	→ On-the-Job Learning (OJL)
Coursework	→ Related Technical Instruction (RTI)
Mentor teachers	→ Journeyworkers or workplace mentors

The terminology may be different. But the core structure is often already in place.

1.4

TOOL

Reflection Prompt

Which parts of your current program might already be apprenticeship-aligned?

Think about:

- Are candidates already working in schools while completing coursework?
- Do you have structured clinical experiences that could be expanded or extended?
- Are mentor teachers or supervisors actively supporting candidates in real classrooms?
- Is coursework intentionally connected to classroom practice?
- Are district partners involved in shaping or supporting candidate experiences?

Write down what's already in place—and what might be your entry point:

Our Program Strengths:

(What is already working well? Where are you further along than you expected?)

Our Possible Starting Point:

(If you were to begin this work, where would you start? One program, one partnership, one shift...)

KEY TAKEAWAY

Apprenticeship is not a separate model layered on top of educator preparation. It is a more connected version of what strong programs already do.

In a time of shifting enrollment, rising costs, and increasing district demand, apprenticeship offers a way to:

- expand access for candidates
- strengthen clinical practice
- and build more intentional, sustained partnerships with schools

It's not about replacing your program. It's about making it more aligned to the realities of candidates and classrooms.

Apprenticeship 101 for Educator Preparation

At first glance, apprenticeship can feel complex, especially with new terminology, multiple partners, and different layers of oversight. But at its core, the model is straightforward.

Overview

This lesson breaks down how Registered Apprenticeship actually works, and what it means specifically for Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs).

Apprenticeship connects:

- on-the-job learning in real settings
- with structured instruction and support
- within a clearly defined partnership model

For EPPs, this isn't about taking on something entirely new. It's about understanding how your role fits within a broader system, and where you have flexibility in how you engage.

THE BIG IDEA

You do not have to do everything to participate in apprenticeship. You just need to understand the structure, and choose your entry point.

As you move into designing your apprenticeship pathway, it's important to recognize that these decisions do more than shape program structure — they also define the evidence you will be able to demonstrate to accreditors and partners.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, you'll be able to:

- Understand the core components of a Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP)
- Identify the different roles within apprenticeship and where EPPs fit
- Distinguish between what EPPs are responsible for, and what they are not
- Explore different entry points into apprenticeship-aligned work

TOOLS & PROMPTS

2.1 What Makes a Registered Apprenticeship (RAP)?

2.2 Who Does What? (Roles & Responsibilities)

2.3 What EPPs Do Not Have to Do

2.4 Entry Points for EPPs

2.5 Reflection Prompt: Where Do You Fit?

■ STRATEGIC REFLECTION

Where do you already collect evidence that apprenticeship could strengthen?

What language shifts might be needed to reflect apprenticeship in accreditation narratives?

How would you describe this model in your next self-study or program review?

Accreditation Alignment: Designing for Evidence, Not Compliance

Apprenticeship is not a departure from accreditation expectations. It is a delivery model that strengthens alignment to CAEP Standards R1 (Content and Pedagogical Knowledge), R2 (Clinical Partnerships and Practice), R4 (Program Impact), and R5 (Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement). It is a delivery model that can strengthen evidence of quality preparation, particularly in clinical practice, candidate impact, and continuous improvement. When designed intentionally, apprenticeship naturally aligns to key areas that accreditors already prioritize.

Where Apprenticeship Naturally Aligns

APPRENTICESHIP ELEMENT	ALIGNMENT AREA
Paid On-the-Job Learning (OJL)	Clinical depth and coherence
Employer Co-Design	Partnership and practice alignment
Competency Tracking	Candidate knowledge and skill development
Candidate Impact Data	Outcomes and effectiveness
Continuous Feedback Loops	Continuous improvement

These connections allow programs to generate stronger, more continuous evidence aligned to CAEP expectations without creating additional reporting burdens.

✱ CAEP ALIGNMENT

For programs aligned to Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, these same elements map directly to existing standards:

APPRENTICESHIP ELEMENT	CAEP STANDARD ALIGNMENT
Paid OJL	Standard R2
Employer Co-Design	Standard R2 & R5
Competency Tracking	Standard R1
Candidate Progression & Performance Data	Standards R2, R3, and R5
Continuous Feedback Loops	Standard R5

These elements not only strengthen program design, but the categories also collectively support evidence across CAEP Standards R1, R2, R3, and R5, with potential connections to Standard R4 as candidates become program completers, including candidate development, clinical practice, and program impact.

2.1

TOOL

What Makes a Registered Apprenticeship (RAP)?

Apprenticeship Degrees are often misunderstood, especially in educator preparation.

Many programs look at their clinical models, residencies, or job-embedded pathways and think: “We’re already doing this.”

In many ways, that’s true. But a Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) is not defined by having some of the components.

It is defined by having all of them, intentionally connected and formally structured.

The 5 Required Components of a RAP

All Registered Apprenticeship Programs include the following elements. These are not optional.

01 On-the-Job Learning (OJL)

WHAT IT MEANS

Paid, supervised work experience where apprentices build skills in real settings

IN PRACTICE

Apprentices are employed (often by a district) and actively working in classrooms while learning

02 Related Technical Instruction (RTI)

WHAT IT MEANS

Structured instruction that builds the knowledge needed for the role

IN PRACTICE

Coursework provided by an EPP or partner, aligned to the work being done

03 Mentorship & Supervision

WHAT IT MEANS

Guidance from experienced professionals supporting skill development

IN PRACTICE

Mentor teachers, coaches, or supervisors providing ongoing feedback

04 Progressive Skill Development

WHAT IT MEANS

A clearly defined pathway showing how skills build over time

IN PRACTICE

Competencies or benchmarks that outline what an apprentice should know and be able to do at each stage

05 Wage Progression

WHAT IT MEANS

Pay increases tied to skill development and milestones

IN PRACTICE

Compensation increases as apprentices demonstrate growth and advance

Where the Confusion Happens: Addressing Misconceptions

Many EPPs already have pieces of this structure in place. However, having the pieces is not the same as having a Registered Apprenticeship.

Below are some of the most common misconceptions, and where the distinction matters:

“We have student teaching, so we already have OJL”

Student teaching is a critical form of clinical practice, but in a RAP, On-the-Job Learning (OJL) is employment-based, consistently structured, and tied to progression over time.

Even when candidates receive stipends during student teaching, this is not the same as OJL in a RAP. Stipends are typically:

- Short-term
- not tied to a formal wage scale
- not connected to progressive advancement

In contrast, RAP OJL is:

- part of an ongoing employment relationship
 - tied to clearly defined skill development
 - and connected to wage progression as competencies are demonstrated
-

“We offer coursework, so we have RTI”

Most EPPs provide strong coursework, but in a RAP, Related Technical Instruction (RTI) is intentionally aligned to what the apprentice is doing on the job, in real time.

This means:

- coursework and practice are designed to reinforce each other
- timing matters (what is learned in class connects directly to what is happening in the classroom)
- partners often co-design elements to ensure relevance

RTI is not just instruction — it is instruction in direct relationship to practice.

“We assign mentor teachers”

Mentor teachers are a strong foundation, but in a RAP, mentorship is formalized as a core component of the model. This often includes:

- clearly defined expectations for mentors
- training or guidance on how to support apprentices
- structured feedback loops tied to competencies
- alignment between mentors and program goals

The shift is from assigned support → intentional, system-level mentorship.

“We track progress through coursework”

EPPs already assess candidates, but RAPs require explicit, shared progression frameworks across partners. This means:

- competencies are clearly defined and sequenced
- progress is visible across both coursework and on-the-job learning
- districts and EPPs are often aligned on what growth looks like

It’s not just evaluation — it’s a shared roadmap for development.

“Some of our candidates are paid, so we already have wage progression.”

Compensation alone is not the same as On-the-Job Learning (OJL). In many EPP models:

- candidates may be working as paraprofessionals or in school-based roles while enrolled
- employment exists separately from the preparation program
- job responsibilities are not formally aligned to program competencies
- student teachers may receive stipends from districts, states, or institutions
- stipends are typically short-term and not tied to progression

In a RAP:

- employment is intentionally connected to the preparation program
- job responsibilities are aligned to skill development
- learning, work, and progression are structured as one pathway

The distinction is paid alongside learning → vs → paid as part of a structured learning pathway

The Difference Isn't the Pieces — It's the Connection

■ NOTE

What makes a RAP distinct is not the presence of these elements. It's that they are:

- intentionally
aligned
- shared across
partners
- formally structured as a single
pathway

Map the Gap (Not Just the Presence)

Instead of asking “Do we have this?” use this table to identify how developed each component is in your current model.

COMPONENT	EMERGING	IN PLACE BUT UNALIGNED	FULLY ALIGNED & STRUCTURED
OJL (Paid, job-embedded learning)	☐	☐	☐
RTI (Aligned coursework)	☐	☐	☐
Mentorship & Supervision	☐	☐	☐
Progressive Skill Development	☐	☐	☐
Wage Progression	☐	☐	☐

■ TRY THIS

Look across your selections:

Where are components already strong?

Where do elements exist but are not yet connected?

Which component feels least developed or most unfamiliar?

That last one is often where the real design work begins.

Jot thoughts here:

KEY TAKEAWAY

A Registered Apprenticeship is not defined by having individual components. It is defined by how those components are:

connected structured shared across partners

Most EPPs are not starting from zero, but moving toward apprenticeship requires shifting from: separate experiences → a unified pathway

2.2

TOOL

Who Does What? Roles & Responsibilities

One of the biggest barriers to getting started with apprenticeship is confusion about roles. Who owns the program? Who is responsible for what? What does the EPP actually have to do?

Apprenticeship is a shared model. No single organization is responsible for everything.

ROLE	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY	WHAT THIS OFTEN LOOKS LIKE IN EDUCATOR PREPARATION
RAP Sponsor	Oversees the apprenticeship program and ensures compliance with federal or state requirements	May be a district, intermediary, or organization managing the program structure
Employer (District/School System)	Employs the apprentice and provides on-the-job learning (OJL)	Hires candidates as paraprofessionals, residents, or teachers-in-training
RTI Provider (EPP)	Delivers Related Technical Instruction (RTI)	Provides coursework, instruction, and academic support
Intermediary (Optional)	Supports coordination, partnerships, and program design	May help connect EPPs, districts, and sponsors or provide implementation support

TRANSLATION

In traditional apprenticeship language, you may hear terms like: sponsor, employer, journeyworker. In educator preparation, these often translate to:

sponsor → **program owner or coordinating entity**

employer → **district or school system**

journeyworker → **mentor teacher or experienced educator**

The terminology may differ — but the structure is consistent.

Governance & Authority

It's also important to understand where formal authority sits:

- Federal or State Apprenticeship Agencies → program registration and oversight
- State licensure bodies → teacher certification requirements
- Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation / Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation → program quality and accreditation
- Institutions → degree conferral and academic oversight

How These Systems Work Together

These layers of authority are often misunderstood, especially when apprenticeship is introduced. Apprenticeship does not replace existing systems. It operates alongside them.

This means:

- licensure requirements still determine who can become a teacher
- accreditation standards still guide program quality and evidence
- institutions still oversee coursework and degree conferral

Apprenticeship connects these systems — it does not override them.

Instead of creating a new pathway outside of educator preparation, apprenticeship provides a structure that helps align:

- what candidates are learning
- what they are doing in classrooms
- and how that growth is measured over time

■ TRY THIS: MAP THE ROLES

Think about your current context. Who might fill each of these roles in your region or partnerships?

RAP Sponsor: _____

Employer (District/School System(s)): _____

RTI Provider (EPP): _____

Intermediary (if applicable): _____

KEY TAKEAWAY

You do not need to own every part of the apprenticeship system. EPPs play a critical role — but it is one part of a broader, shared structure. Understanding that structure allows you to: focus on what you do best, partner where needed, and enter this work without overextending your role

2.3

TOOL

What EPPs Do NOT Have to Do

This is where many Educator Preparation Programs pause — or opt out entirely. There is a common assumption that engaging in apprenticeship means taking on an entirely new system. That is not the case.

Let's clear that up.

EPPS DO NOT HAVE TO:

- become the Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) sponsor
- manage federal or state registration processes
- design or oversee wage progression systems
- replace existing degree programs or start from scratch
- launch a full apprenticeship degree immediately

WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE

Many EPPs begin by:

- serving as the Related Technical Instruction (RTI) provider
- aligning existing coursework to apprenticeship structures
- partnering with a district or sponsor already leading the RAP
- piloting within one program, pathway, or partnership

■ NOTE

Starting small is not a limitation. It is often the most effective way to begin. Strong programs are typically built by: testing within one context, refining the model, and expanding over time

YOU MIGHT BE THINKING:

“Do we need full institutional approval before we even start?”

In many cases, no. Some apprenticeship-aligned shifts can begin within existing program structures, especially when they strengthen:

clinical practice partnerships and candidate support

The key is understanding what requires formal approval, and what can be piloted or adapted within your current model.

■ TRY THIS

Think about your current program. What is one step you could take that does **not** require: a full redesign, new program approval, or major structural change

Look at the options below. These are common “low-lift” ways EPPs begin this work. Check one that feels realistic in your current context:

- ☐ Align one existing course more intentionally to classroom practice
- ☐ Strengthen one district partnership around clinical placements
- ☐ Identify candidates already working in schools and better support their pathway
- ☐ Clarify mentor teacher roles and expectations in one program
- ☐ Map one program against apprenticeship components (OJL, RTI, etc.)
- ☐ Start a conversation with a district or potential partner
- ☐ Something else: _____

Now narrow it down:

Which one feels both meaningful and doable in the next 60–90 days?

Our starting move: _____

What makes this “low lift”?

- ☐ Builds on something we already do
- ☐ Does not require formal approval to begin
- ☐ Can be tested in one program or partnership
- ☐ Can be led by a small team

KEY TAKEAWAY

You do not need to build everything to begin. You only need a clear entry point.

Apprenticeship becomes manageable when you: start within your existing strengths, define your role clearly, and grow the model over time

2.4

TOOL

Entry Points EPPs

There is no single way to engage in apprenticeship. EPPs enter this work in different ways, depending on their context, partnerships, and capacity. The goal is not to choose the “most advanced” model. **It’s to choose the right starting point.**

■ RTI Provider

The EPP delivers coursework aligned to apprenticeship requirements

WHEN THIS MAKES SENSE You already have strong coursework and want to align it more directly to practice

■ Pre-Apprenticeship Partner

The EPP helps prepare candidates for entry into a RAP

WHEN THIS MAKES SENSE You want to build a pipeline without launching a full apprenticeship yet

■ Co-Design Partner

The EPP works with districts to shape program structure and experience

WHEN THIS MAKES SENSE You have strong partnerships and want to deepen alignment

■ Apprenticeship Degree Program

A fully integrated, credit-bearing apprenticeship pathway

WHEN THIS MAKES SENSE You are ready to align coursework, clinical practice, and employment into one model

What to Notice

These are not separate tracks. They are points along a continuum. Many EPPs start as an RTI provider or co-design partner, pilot within one program or partnership and expand into more integrated models over time.

YOU MIGHT BE THINKING:

“What if we choose the wrong starting point?”

Well, you’re not locked in. Entry points can evolve as partnerships strengthen, internal capacity grows and programs are refined.

■ TRY THIS: MATCH YOUR ENTRY POINT

Look back at your “starting move” from the previous section. Which entry point does it most closely align to?

- ☐ RTI Provider
- ☐ Pre-Apprenticeship Partner
- ☐ Co-Design Partner
- ☐ Apprenticeship Degree Program

■ REFLECT

Does this feel like the right level of scope for your team right now? What would need to be true for you to move to the next level over time?

Jot thoughts here:

KEY TAKEAWAY

You don't have to start at the most complex version of apprenticeship. You just need to start in a way that: builds on your strengths, aligns to your context, and creates momentum

2.5

TOOL

Reflection

At this point, you've explored:

- what defines a Registered Apprenticeship
- how roles are structured across partners
- what you do and don't have to take on
- and the different ways EPPs can engage

Now it's time to ground that in your context.

■ THINK ABOUT

Which parts of the apprenticeship structure feel most familiar?

Which roles or responsibilities feel most aligned to your current work?

Where do you already have strong partnerships or foundations?

Where do you still have questions or uncertainty?

Where we most naturally fit right now:

(Which role or entry point feels most aligned?)

What feels clear:

(What clicked or made sense in this lesson?)

What still feels uncertain:

(Where do we need more clarity, support, or exploration?)

KEY TAKEAWAY

Apprenticeship is not a single model you either have or don't. It is a structure you can step into, in different ways, at different points. EPPs do not need to own the entire system to play a meaningful role. They need to: understand the structure, define their role within it, and take a clear, manageable first step

Designing Programs Within EPP Structures

By this point, you understand the structure of apprenticeship and where your program might fit. Now the question becomes: What does this actually look like in practice?

Overview

This lesson focuses on how apprenticeship translates into actual program design within an Educator Preparation Program.

For many EPPs, candidates spend years learning about teaching before having consistent access to real classrooms. In apprenticeship-aligned models, that dynamic shifts. Candidates are not waiting to practice. They are already in schools, every day.

The Opportunity

This creates a powerful opportunity. Instead of treating coursework and clinical experience as separate phases, programs can begin to:

- recognize candidates' daily work as a central part of their learning
- design instruction that is immediately relevant to what candidates are experiencing
- and reinforce skills through continuous, real-world application

The distinction matters. This is not just about having candidates who happen to work in schools. It is about intentionally designing programs that treat that daily experience as an asset and using it to accelerate learning, skill development, and confidence over time.

THE BIG IDEA

Strong apprenticeship-aligned programs are not built by adding more. They are built by unlocking and connecting what already exists:

coursework (RTI) clinical practice (OJL) and program structure

When these elements are aligned, candidates are not preparing to teach someday. They are learning to teach every day they are in classrooms.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, you'll be able to:

- Align coursework (RTI) more intentionally to real-time classroom practice
- Redesign assignments and assessments to reflect what candidates do in real school settings
- Reframe clinical experiences as continuous, job-embedded learning (OJL)
- Identify how program structure (scheduling, pacing, modality) supports or limits alignment
- Clarify how faculty roles evolve to support connected, practice-based learning

TOOLS & PROMPTS

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 3.1 | Course to Practice Alignment (RTI) |
| 3.2 | From Coursework to Real-World, Real-Time Application |
| 3.3 | Clinical Practice as OJL |
| 3.4 | Program Structure: Scheduling, Modality & Models |
| 3.5 | Faculty Roles in an Apprenticeship Model |
| 3.6 | Reflection Prompt: Where Do We Start Designing? |
-

3.1

TOOL

Course to Practice Alignment (RTI)

In apprenticeship, coursework is not separate from practice (CAEP Standard R1). It is designed to directly support what candidates are doing in real schools and classrooms, in real time.

What This Means

In many programs, coursework is:

- sequenced based on academic logic or tradition
- designed independently from classroom realities
- applied later — or inconsistently

This can create a gap between:

- what candidates are learning
- and what they are actually doing in schools

The Shift

Apprenticeship doesn't change what is taught. It changes when and how learning connects to practice. Instead of preparing for future application, coursework becomes:

**immediately
relevant**

**intentionally
timed**

**directly connected to classroom
experience**

TRANSLATION

In apprenticeship language, this is called Related Technical Instruction (RTI). For EPPs, this is familiar. The shift is from:

coursework that prepares for practice

TO

coursework that is actively supporting practice as it happens

What This Looks Like in Practice

RTI-aligned coursework might:

- introduce a strategy that candidates use in their classroom that same week
- require assignments based on real students or lessons they are teaching
- align course topics to increasing levels of instructional responsibility
- incorporate feedback from the field into ongoing instruction and discussion

TRY THIS: MAP ONE COURSE

Choose one course in your program.

COURSE NAME	WHAT CANDIDATES LEARN	WHERE/HOW IT SHOWS UP IN PRACTICE (THIS WEEK OR SOON AFTER)
-------------	-----------------------	--

--	--	--

REFLECT

Is the connection between coursework and classroom practice clear and immediate?

Are candidates applying what they learn while they are still learning it?

Where does coursework feel disconnected from what candidates are experiencing in schools?

Jot thoughts here:

KEY TAKEAWAY

RTI is not just coursework. It is coursework that is: intentionally timed, directly connected to practice, and designed to support what candidates are doing as they do it

3.2

TOOL

From Coursework to Real-World, Real-Time Application

Seeing the connection between coursework and practice is an important first step.

The next question is:

How do we design learning so candidates are applying it in real settings — not just reading, writing, or taking exams about it?

The Shift

In many courses, learning is assessed through:

- discussion boards
- essays or written reflections
- quizzes or exams

These can demonstrate understanding, but they don't always demonstrate what candidates can actually do in practice.

What Changes

INSTEAD OF ASKING

“Can the candidate explain this concept?”

APPRENTICESHIP-ALIGNED COURSEWORK

ASKS

“Can the candidate use this in a real classroom, with real students?”

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE — REAL EXAMPLE

Real Example: Reframing a Foundations Course

IN A TRADITIONAL INTRODUCTORY SPECIAL EDUCATION COURSE, CANDIDATES MIGHT:	APPRENTICESHIP-ALIGNED SHIFT
Read about disability categories	Research the disability, then apply learning by observing, supporting, or designing an instructional response for a student and explaining how your approach aligns to what you learned
Discussion board on education law	Analyze a specific law, then explain how it shows up in your school or classroom and evaluate how effectively it is being implemented in practice
Case study analysis (pre-written scenario)	Use a real classroom experience to analyze a student, lesson, or instructional challenge and propose next steps based on course concepts
General reflection paper	Reflect on a specific teaching moment from that week (either led, supported or observed), connecting it directly to course concepts and identifying what you would adjust moving forward

The content stays the same. What changes is how learning is applied, observed, and reinforced in real time. In each example, candidates are not just demonstrating understanding. They are using what they’ve learned to make decisions in real contexts.

What to Notice

These shifts do not require:

new content new standards or a full course redesign

Instead, they require a shift in:

how learning is applied and assessed

■ TRY THIS: REDESIGN ONE ASSIGNMENT

Choose one assignment from a course you teach or oversee.

Step 1: Identify the Learning Goal

What is this assignment meant to assess?

Step 2: Ground It in Practice

How could candidates demonstrate this learning in a real classroom, school, or district context?

Step 3: Make the Shift

Rewrite the assignment in one sentence:

Instead of: _____

Candidates will: _____

Step 4: Consider Feasibility

Could this be completed:

- ☐ Within a candidate's current school role regardless of the semester
- ☐ During an official clinical placement only (student teaching)
- ☐ Through observation, interaction, or small-scale practice

■ PRO TIP

Don't just look for alignment—look for application. If a learning objective isn't clearly showing up in real classroom practice, consider how the assignment or assessment could be adjusted so candidates demonstrate that skill in their current school context.

KEY TAKEAWAY

You do not need to replace coursework to align with apprenticeship. You need to rethink how learning is demonstrated.

When assignments are grounded in real practice: learning becomes more relevant, candidates improve in real time, and coursework and OJL begin to function as one system

3.3

TOOL

Clinical Practice as OJL

Clinical practice is one of the strongest foundations EPPs already have (CAEP Standard R2: Clinical Partnerships and Practice). Apprenticeship builds on this by reframing clinical experience as On-the-Job Learning (OJL).

What Changes?

TRADITIONAL CLINICAL MODELS OFTEN	IN AN APPRENTICESHIP-ALIGNED MODEL, CLINICAL PRACTICE BECOMES:
Concentrate most teaching responsibility into a final placement (e.g., student teaching)	Teaching responsibility is gradually built over time, starting earlier and increasing as skills develop
Treat earlier experiences as observation or limited practice	Early experiences are active, skill-based practice with clear purpose and feedback
Separate coursework from real-time classroom application	Coursework is immediately applied in the classroom, with learning and practice happening in tandem
Clinical experience is time-bound to a specific semester or phase	Clinical practice is job-embedded and ongoing across the program
Expect readiness before giving responsibility	Use responsibility to build readiness, with structured support and progression
Evaluate performance at key checkpoints or final placements	Provide continuous feedback tied to skill progression over time

Key Distinction

Clinical practice can function as OJL, but only when it is intentionally structured this way.

OJL IS NOT DEFINED BY

being in a classroom
or completing a required placement

IT IS DEFINED BY

continuous, job-embedded skill
development
progression over time
and alignment to what candidates are
learning and doing each day

■ YOU MIGHT BE SEEING THIS ALREADY

Candidates who are:

- working as paraprofessionals or aides
- supporting small groups or individual students
- gradually taking on instructional responsibilities

These are not just “experiences.” They are opportunities for OJL, when connected to: program expectations

- skill progression
- and structured feedback

TRY THIS: EXPAND THE LEARNING WINDOW

Think beyond the final clinical placement. Where could candidates begin developing teaching skills earlier or more frequently?

Before student teaching officially begins	
During coursework semesters	
Within roles candidates already hold in schools	
Through smaller, repeated teaching opportunities	
Through structured observation tied to specific skills	

■ REFLECT

Where is learning currently compressed into one phase? Where could it be distributed across the program instead?

Jot thoughts here:

KEY TAKEAWAY

The difference is not clinical vs OJL. It is: learning concentrated at the end → vs → learning embedded and continuous over time

3.4

TOOL

Program Structure: Scheduling, Modality & Models

Program structure plays a critical role in whether apprenticeship alignment is possible.

Even when coursework and clinical experiences are strong, misalignment in structure can make them feel disconnected.

Where Structure Creates Friction

In many EPPs, program design reflects traditional assumptions about:

- when candidates are available
- when professors are available
- how courses are delivered
- and how learning progresses over time

These assumptions don't always align with candidates who are:

working in
schools

balancing multiple
responsibilities

and learning through daily
practice

What Changes?

TRADITIONAL PROGRAM STRUCTURES OFTEN	IN AN APPRENTICESHIP-ALIGNED MODEL, STRUCTURE BECOMES:
Courses scheduled around institutional convenience	Scheduled with school-day realities in mind
Fixed delivery formats (e.g., daytime, in-person)	Flexible and accessible for working candidates
Course sequences based on program tradition	Sequenced to match increasing classroom responsibility
Clinical experience separated from coursework timing	Integrated with when candidates are actively teaching
Pacing determined by semesters alone	Responsive to skill development and real-world practice

WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE

Apprenticeship-aligned programs often explore:

- evening, weekend, or hybrid course delivery
- cohort models tied to district or school partnerships
- course sequencing that mirrors or allows for classroom responsibility growth
- flexible pacing that supports candidates already working in schools

Constraints vs. Design Choices

As you consider program structure, it's important to distinguish between what is required, and what is simply familiar.

■ REFLECT

What structural constraints are truly required (e.g., licensure, accreditation, financial aid)?

Which elements of your current model are inherited habits rather than requirements?

Where might flexibility already exist — but hasn't been explored?

Jot thoughts here:

Reality Check: Institutional Timelines

While many apprenticeship-aligned shifts can begin quickly at the course or partnership level, larger structural changes often move at a different pace. In practice, programs are navigating timelines such as:

- Faculty engagement and buy-in
- State approval or program modification cycles
- Budget planning windows
- Accreditation and reporting cycles

These timelines don't prevent progress — but they do shape how and when changes can be implemented.

■ REFLECT

As you think about your program:

Which changes could begin immediately?

Which ones are tied to longer institutional timelines?

How might you design a starting point that builds momentum while larger shifts are underway?

Jot thoughts here:

■ **TRY THIS: PRESSURE-TEST YOUR STRUCTURE**

Look at your current program design. Where might structure be creating friction?

- ☐ Course schedules conflict with school responsibilities
 - ☐ Coursework timing doesn't match clinical experience
 - ☐ Limited flexibility for working candidates
 - ☐ Program pacing doesn't reflect how skills actually develop
 - ☐ Candidates must step away from work to complete requirements
-

■ **REFLECT**

Which of these feels most limiting? Which feels most feasible to adjust?

Jot thoughts here:

Credit, Compliance & Financial Aid Considerations

As programs explore apprenticeship-aligned structures, questions often arise around credit hours, financial aid, and compliance.

These are important considerations—but they are not barriers to getting started.

Key questions to explore include:

1 Does On-the-Job Learning (OJL) count toward credit hours?

In many programs, OJL can be embedded within clinical coursework or aligned to credit-bearing experiences

2 How will attendance be documented?

Programs often align documentation with existing clinical tracking, coursework participation, or employer verification

3 How will financial aid (e.g., Pell) be protected for working apprentices?

Apprenticeship models can coexist with financial aid when programs maintain credit-bearing structures and meet eligibility requirements

4 What Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) policies apply?

Apprentices remain subject to institutional SAP policies tied to credit completion and academic performance

■ IMPORTANT

These considerations are not new requirements — they are extensions of systems EPPs already navigate.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Structure doesn't just support the program. It determines whether alignment is possible.

Shifting structure, even in small ways, can unlock: better integration between coursework and practice, increased access for candidates, and more sustainable program models

3.5

TOOL

Faculty Roles in an Apprenticeship Model

One of the most important, and sometimes most sensitive, shifts in apprenticeship-aligned programs is how faculty roles evolve.

WHAT STAYS THE SAME	WHAT EXPANDS
Faculty remain central to the program (CAEP Standards R1 and R3: Candidate Quality and Instruction). They continue to: ■ serve as instructors of record ■ ensure academic quality and rigor ■ design and deliver coursework ■ support candidate learning and development None of this changes.	In an apprenticeship-aligned model, faculty roles become more connected to practice and partnerships. This may include: ■ aligning coursework more directly to what candidates are doing in classrooms ■ using real classroom experiences as the foundation for assignments and discussion ■ collaborating more closely with district partners and mentor teachers ■ engaging in ongoing feedback loops tied to candidate performance in the field

Where Tension Can Show Up

These shifts don't require a new role — but they can require a different way of working. Some common questions or concerns include:

“How do we stay focused on academic rigor?”

“What does this mean for course design and autonomy?”

“How do we coordinate with mentors or districts without losing clarity of roles?”

These are valid questions. And they are part of the design process — not barriers to it.

Clarifying the Roles

It's helpful to distinguish between two complementary roles:

- Faculty → responsible for academic instruction, assessment, and program integrity
- Mentor Teachers / Supervisors → responsible for supporting day-to-day practice and development in classrooms

These roles are not interchangeable. They are most effective when they are: clearly defined, intentionally connected, and aligned around shared expectations for candidate growth

TRANSLATION

In apprenticeship language, you may hear:

“RTI provider” → **faculty and coursework**

“journeyworker” → **mentor teacher or experienced educator**

The terminology may differ. But both roles are essential to how learning happens.

Elevating Faculty Expertise in an Apprenticeship Model

One of the most common concerns in apprenticeship-aligned models is whether faculty roles are diminished when candidates spend more time learning in the field. In practice, the opposite is often true. Faculty remain the instructors of record and are responsible for:

- academic instruction
- assessment of candidate learning
- and maintaining program rigor and integrity

Mentor teachers and district partners support on-the-job learning (OJL), but they do not replace the role of faculty in teaching, evaluating, or shaping candidate development. What changes is visibility. In apprenticeship-aligned models in that coursework is more directly connected to classroom practice, candidate performance is more observable in real time, and faculty insight becomes more relevant to district partners.

This creates an opportunity for faculty expertise to extend beyond the university and into the systems where candidates are working every day. Rather than reducing the role of faculty, apprenticeship can:

- strengthen the connection between pedagogy and practice
- increase the impact of faculty instruction on real classrooms
- and elevate faculty as key contributors to workforce development and educator pipelines

TRY THIS: WHERE DO FACULTY ROLES SIT TODAY?

Look at the statements below. Sort them into two columns:

ALREADY STRONG IN OUR PROGRAM	OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH

Statements to consider:

- Coursework is clearly connected to real classroom practice
- Assignments are based on candidates' actual teaching experiences
- Faculty regularly engage with what candidates are doing in the field
- There is coordination between faculty and mentor teachers or districts
- Coursework aligns to daily or weekly classroom responsibilities
- Faculty use real-time feedback from the field to inform instruction
- There is a clear connection between coursework and skill progression

■ REFLECT

Where does faculty insight already shape candidate practice?

How might that influence become more visible or impactful in a job-embedded model?

What opportunities could this create for stronger collaboration with district partners?

Jot thoughts here:

Push it one step further:

If you could move one item from “Opportunity” to “Already Strong”

Which would it be?

What would need to change to make that happen?

KEY TAKEAWAY

Faculty roles do not change in purpose. They expand in connection.

Apprenticeship does not replace faculty expertise. It creates more opportunities for that expertise to be applied in ways that are: visible in practice, connected to real classrooms, and aligned to candidate growth over time

3.6

TOOL

Reflection Prompt: Where Do We Start Designing?

You've explored how coursework, clinical practice, program structure, and faculty roles connect within an apprenticeship-aligned model.

Now it's time to decide where to begin and ground that in your context.

■ THINK ABOUT

Which parts of the apprenticeship structure feel most familiar?

Which roles or responsibilities feel most aligned to your current work?

Where do you already have strong partnerships or foundations?

Where do you still have questions or uncertainty?

Where we most naturally fit right now:

(Which role or entry point feels most aligned?)

What feels clear:

(What clicked or made sense in this lesson?)

What still feels uncertain:

(Where do we need more clarity, support, or exploration?)

Apprenticeship Standards & Sponsorship

If you are in early stages, you can skim this section or return to it later. You do not need to start with registration to begin this work.

Overview

As you begin designing or refining an apprenticeship-aligned program, you may encounter several structural elements that shape how these programs are built and sustained.

This includes:

- Competencies or standards (what candidates need to know and be able to do)
- Alignment of coursework and practice (how learning is structured across the program)
- and, in some cases, formal apprenticeship registration (how programs are documented and approved)

Not all programs will engage in formal registration immediately. However, understanding how these elements connect will help you:

- strengthen your program design
- align learning more intentionally to practice
- and make informed decisions as your program evolves

How to Use This Lesson:

YOU MAY FIND THIS LESSON HELPFUL IF

- you are aligning to a Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP)
- you are working with a sponsor or state model
- you are exploring formal registration
- or you want a deeper understanding of how apprenticeship systems are structured

SKIP OR RETURN LATER IF

If you are in early stages, you can skim this section or return to it later. You do not need to start with registration to begin this work.

Start with:

- what candidates need to learn
- and how that learning shows up in practice

From there, alignment and structure can grow over time.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, you'll be able to:

- Understand the role of competencies or standards in shaping candidate learning and progression
- Identify common sources of standards used in educator preparation and apprenticeship models
- Align coursework and clinical experiences to those competencies in meaningful ways
- Distinguish between alignment work and formal apprenticeship documentation (e.g., Appendix A)
- Understand how program sponsorship and registration may influence structure and design

TOOLS & PROMPTS

4.1 Understanding Apprenticeship Competencies & Standards

4.2 Aligning Coursework to Competencies

4.3 RAP Registration & Appendix A (Optional Deep Dive)

4.4 Understanding Sponsorship & Your Role

■ NOTE

This lesson is designed as an optional deep dive. Engage with the sections that are most relevant to your current stage.

4.1

TOOL

Understanding Apprenticeship Competencies & Standards

What Are Competencies? Well, if you work in an Educator Preparation Program, competencies are not new to you (CAEP Standards R1 and R3). EPPs already define what candidates should know and be able to do through:

- state teaching standards
- State or national frameworks such as InTASC
- program-level outcomes
- and accreditation expectations

You are likely already designing coursework, assessments, and clinical experiences with these in mind.

So What Changes in an Apprenticeship Model?

Apprenticeship does not introduce an entirely new set of expectations (Aligned to CAEP Standards R1 and R3). Instead, it builds on what already exists, and asks programs to make those expectations more:

visible connected to real classroom practice

intentionally developed over time

In this context, competencies are not just something candidates are exposed to, they are something candidates are expected to demonstrate, revisit, and strengthen continuously throughout the program.

A Simple Way to Think About It

You already have the “what.” Apprenticeship helps structure the “when,” “where,” and “how”:

When	competencies are introduced and reinforced
Where	they show up in real teaching practice
How	growth is observed and supported over time

When Will You Encounter These?

If you are working within or alongside an apprenticeship model, competencies may come from several places:

- a RAP sponsor or intermediary
- state-developed teacher apprenticeship frameworks (in some states)
- national or field-developed models such as [Pathways Alliance for Teacher Apprenticeship](#)
- or your existing program standards

This might feel familiar, because it IS. In many cases, apprenticeship competencies overlap significantly with state teaching standards, InTASC, and program-level expectations. The difference is rarely the content itself, rather, it is how that content is structured, reinforced, and tracked over time.

The Bottleneck Problem (and the Opportunity)

In many traditional models:

- key teaching competencies are formally assessed during student teaching
- earlier coursework may introduce concepts, but not fully track development
- and demonstration of skill is concentrated at the end

This can create a bottleneck where:

- candidates are expected to demonstrate multiple competencies at once
- feedback comes late in the process
- and opportunities for growth are compressed into a short timeframe

Apprenticeship Creates a Different Opportunity

Apprenticeship-aligned models allow programs to:

spread competency development across the entire program

This allows candidates to:

practice earlier improve continuously demonstrate growth over time

WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE (CAEP R3.3: COMPETENCY AT COMPLETION)

Instead of asking:

“Can they demonstrate this by the end?”

Programs begin asking:

“Where is this introduced, practiced, and strengthened on the job, across the program?”

A Note on State vs Program Standards

This is one area where programs may see variation.

In some states:

- state agencies or apprenticeship offices provide defined competency frameworks
- programs may be expected or encouraged to align to those standards

In other cases, RAP sponsors or institutions develop their own competency frameworks often drawing from:

state standards InTASC or national models

Can Programs Use Their Own Standards?

Often, yes—but with parameters. Programs may propose or adapt their own competencies if they:

- align to recognized teaching standards
- clearly define progression and skill development
- meet expectations set by the registering body (state or federal)

In practice, this usually means:

you are not starting from scratch

you are structuring and refining what already exists

What This Means for You

You are likely already teaching these competencies. The opportunity is to make them more visible, connect them more directly to practice, and track how they develop across the program.

■ TRY THIS: START THE ALIGNMENT CONVERSATION

Do you currently use any of the following?

- ☐ State teaching standards
- ☐ InTASC or similar frameworks
- ☐ Program-level competencies
- ☐ District expectations

■ REFLECT

Where are these already present in your program?

Where might they be: introduced earlier, reinforced more intentionally, or tracked more clearly over time

■ PRO TIP

Start by identifying where competencies already exist in your program. Then ask: Where are we seeing these in practice, and where are we not?

That's where alignment work begins.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Apprenticeship does not introduce entirely new expectations. It makes existing expectations: more visible, more connected to real practice, and more intentionally developed over time

4.2

TOOL

Aligning Coursework to Competencies

Programs already align coursework to standards and competencies. In fact, this is where your design practice from Lesson 3 connects directly to competencies for RAPs. Apprenticeship-aligned programs take this further by:

- connecting competencies directly to what candidates are doing in classrooms
- embedding skill development into coursework and assignments
- and reinforcing competencies across the program—not just at the end

From Coverage to Application

In many courses, competencies are introduced through readings, discussed in class and assessed through written assignments. These approaches build important knowledge, but they don't always ensure that candidates are applying those competencies in real settings. This is a critical nuance when thinking about how coursework now has the opportunity to support real-time practitioners.

A Design Opportunity

Not all competencies need to be concentrated at the end of a program. Many, especially those related to professionalism, communication, and foundational instructional practices can be introduced early and strengthened throughout the program. This creates an opportunity not only to move competencies earlier but to make them more meaningful as candidates engage with them.

At the same time, apprenticeship-aligned programs shift how those competencies are experienced. Instead of asking:

INSTEAD OF ASKING

**“How do we cover
this competency?”**

PROGRAMS BEGIN ASKING

**“How do candidates
demonstrate this competency
through their actual work?”**

This often leads to small but meaningful shifts, such as:

- replacing or adapting assignments to connect to candidates’ current classrooms
- using real students, lessons, or school contexts as the basis for assessment
- asking candidates to apply concepts, not just describe them

WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE

A course might shift from:

analyzing a case study

→ *analyzing a real student or classroom
scenario*

writing about instructional strategies

→ *implementing and reflecting on those
strategies in practice*

discussing policy or theory

→ *examining how it shows up in their school or
district*

TRY THIS: BRING COMPETENCIES INTO COURSEWORK

Step 1: Look at a Competency

Select one competency from: your program standards, state standards or a sample apprenticeship framework

Step 2: Look at a Course or Assignment

Choose one course you currently teach or support. Identify an assignment that: introduces or relates to this competency

Step 3: Make the Shift

How could this assignment be adapted so candidates: demonstrate this competency through their real classroom or school context? Consider: using their own students or setting, applying a strategy instead of describing it, analyzing real data or experiences

Step 4: Reflect

What would improve for candidates if this shift were made?

Not sure where to start?

Look for assignments that already ask candidates to reflect, analyze, or plan and anchor them in real classroom practice.

■ PRO TIP

Start with competencies that are easier to embed early, such as: professionalism, communication, classroom environment, foundational instructional practices. These often provide the quickest opportunity for meaningful alignment.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Alignment is not about adding more. It's about shifting how learning is: applied, demonstrated, and reinforced over time

4.3

TOOL

RAP Registration & Appendix A (Optional Deep Dive)

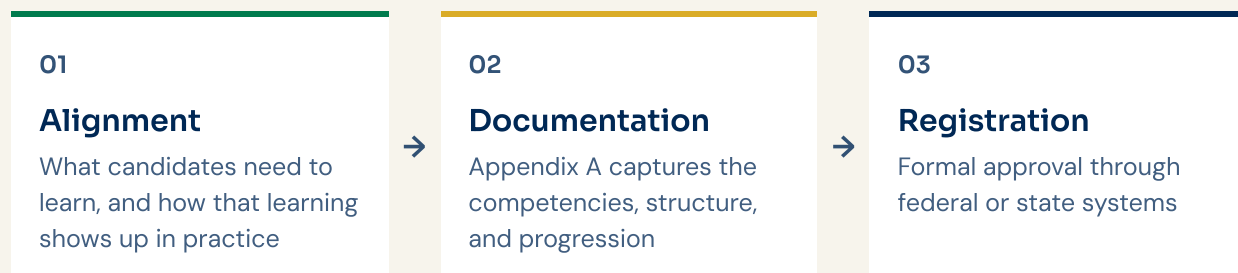
Optional Deep Dive: This section is most relevant if you are working within or planning to pursue a registered apprenticeship model.

What Is RAP Registration?

Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) are formally approved through federal or state systems. Registration provides:

- formal recognition
- access to certain funding streams
- and a structured framework for program design and reporting

THE ORDER OF THE WORK



Where Does Appendix A Fit?

Appendix A is a required document in the RAP registration process. It captures key elements of the program, including:

the competencies or standards

how training is structured

how progression is defined

What This Means for EPPs

You do not need Appendix A to begin aligning your program. However, you may engage with it if:

- you are registering a program
- you are partnering with a RAP sponsor
- or you are supporting program documentation

TOOL SPOTLIGHT: BUILDING APPENDIX A

If you are developing or refining a registered apprenticeship program, tools can help streamline this process. For example, **Craft's Rapid Register** (a free tool) allows programs to:

- upload existing program information
- respond to structured prompts
- generate a draft aligned to apprenticeship requirements

This draft can then be refined with partners before submission.

craftededucation.com/rapid-register

KEY TAKEAWAY

Start with alignment. Registration and documentation can follow as your program develops.

4.4

TOOL

Understanding Sponsorship & Your Role

What Is a RAP Sponsor?

Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) are formally approved through federal or state systems. Registration provides:

- formal recognition
- access to certain funding streams
- and a structured framework for program design and reporting

A RAP SPONSOR IS THE ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- registering the program
- maintaining program standards
- overseeing compliance and reporting
- managing overall program structure

Sponsors may include:

- school districts
- workforce organizations or intermediaries
- employers
- and, in some cases, postsecondary institutions

Do EPPs Need to Become Sponsors?

No.

Most EPPs begin by:

- partnering with an existing sponsor
- providing coursework (RTI)
- aligning to program structure

When Might an EPP Consider It?

An EPP may explore sponsorship if:

- no sponsor exists in their region
- they want greater control over program design
- they are scaling across multiple partners

Registered vs Non-Registered Models

REGISTERED RAP	NON-REGISTERED MODEL
Formal recognition	No formal designation
Access to funding streams	More limited funding access
Structured requirements	More flexibility
Requires approval and reporting	Easier to pilot

■ TRY THIS: CONSIDER YOUR ROLE

At this stage, what role makes the most sense?

- ☐ Partner with an existing sponsor
 - ☐ Provide coursework (RTI)
 - ☐ Explore deeper involvement over time
 - ☐ Not sure yet
-

■ REFLECT

What aligns with your current capacity? What might evolve over time?

KEY TAKEAWAY

You do not need to define your final structure to begin.
Start with: alignment, partnerships, and small, intentional
design shifts

Partnerships, Roles & Implementation Realities

Apprenticeship is not implemented by a single institution. It is built through shared responsibility across EPPs, districts, and partners (CAEP Standard R2: Clinical Partnerships and Practice).

Overview

Up to this point, you've explored how apprenticeship works and how programs can be designed within an EPP. Now we shift to what makes these programs possible in practice:

Partnerships.

The Opportunity

Many EPPs already have relationships with districts. But those partnerships are often focused on:

placement supervision or coordination

Apprenticeship creates an opportunity to move beyond coordination and toward co-design and shared ownership (CAEP R2.1: Partnerships for Clinical Preparation).

Expanding What Partnership Can Be

In traditional models, partnerships are often limited to:

- districts already connected to the program
- schools that host student teachers
- or locations where placement is feasible

This can unintentionally limit both reach and impact. In apprenticeship-aligned models, partnership can expand based on:

- workforce need (e.g., teacher shortages, hard-to-fill roles)
- district priorities (e.g., Grow Your Own efforts, retention goals)
- existing school staff who are already working with students and seeking pathways into teaching

What This Makes Possible

Because candidates are often already employed in schools, EPPs can:

- partner with districts they may not have traditionally worked with
- build pathways aligned to specific hiring needs
- recruit candidates who are already committed to their communities and schools

This shifts the model from:



A Broader Impact

This approach can also support a broader range of candidates entering the profession — not by targeting specific groups, but by removing barriers and expanding access.

When pathways are:

job-embedded financially viable and locally connected

they naturally open opportunities for individuals who may not have been able to access traditional preparation models.

Why This Matters

Partnerships are no longer just about where candidates complete requirements. They become a way to:

- respond to real workforce needs
- strengthen local educator pipelines
- and build programs that are both relevant and sustainable

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, you'll be able to:

- Understand how partnerships shift in an apprenticeship-aligned model
- Clarify roles and expectations across EPPs, districts, and partners
- Identify what strong partnership design looks like in practice
- Anticipate common implementation challenges and how to navigate them

TOOLS & PROMPTS

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 5.1 | From Placement to Partnership |
| 5.2 | Roles in Practice: Who Owns What |
| 5.3 | What Strong Partnerships Actually Look Like |
| 5.4 | Implementation Realities & Common Challenges |
| 5.5 | Reflection Prompt: Strengthening Our Partnerships |

5.1

TOOL

From Placement to Partnership

Many EPP partnerships with districts are built around placement. Candidates are placed in classrooms. Mentor teachers are assigned. Supervisors conduct observations. This works, but it can sometimes be transactional as it serves one very specific purpose and doesn't necessarily rely on shared investment in the growth of the candidate over longer than six months or a year.

What Changes

TRADITIONAL PARTNERSHIPS OFTEN...	IN AN APPRENTICESHIP-ALIGNED MODEL, PARTNERSHIPS BECOME...
Focused on placing candidates in classrooms	Focused on developing candidates together
Coordinated by one side (often the EPP)	Co-designed between EPPs and districts
Limited to specific phases (e.g., student teaching)	Sustained across the full program experience
Centered on supervision and evaluation	Centered on development, support, and progression
Loosely connected to coursework	Intentionally aligned to coursework and skill development

In apprenticeship, partners are not just supporting the program. They are building it together.

WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE

IN A TRADITIONAL MODEL

A district hosts student teachers. The EPP places candidates and evaluates them

IN AN APPRENTICESHIP-ALIGNED MODEL

the district and EPP work together to define: what candidates will learn, how responsibilities will increase over time, how coursework aligns to classroom practice over the course of the program

The partnership shifts from: placement → shared execution

■ TRY THIS: REFRAME ONE PARTNERSHIP

Think about one district or partner you currently work with.

Step 1: Current State

How would you describe the partnership today?



Primarily focused on placement



Some collaboration beyond placement



Strong, ongoing collaboration

Step 2: Future Shift

What would it look like to move one step further?

KEY TAKEAWAY

Strong partnerships are not defined by frequency of interaction.
They are defined by shared ownership of candidate development.

■ SUPPORT AVAILABLE

Craft can help you identify partners aligned to your goals, pathway, or region — craftededucation.com/schedule.

5.2

TOOL

Roles in Practice: Who Owns What

Understanding roles conceptually is one thing. Seeing how they function in practice is another.

What This Looks Like

In strong apprenticeship-aligned partnerships:

PARTNER	WHAT THEY OWN
Districts	support daily learning and experience (CAEP R2.1: Partnerships and R2.3: Clinical Experiences)
EPPs	support instruction, structure, and progression
Mentors	support on-the-ground development
Partners	communicate regularly about candidate growth

Strong partnerships in apprenticeship-aligned models also include clearly defined roles, shared responsibility for candidate development, and structured communication routines that support both program quality and candidate success.

Where Misalignment Happens

Common breakdowns include:

- unclear expectations between EPPs and districts
- disconnect between coursework and classroom responsibilities
- inconsistent mentor support
- limited communication about candidate progress

The Fix Clarity + communication.

■ TRY THIS: CLARIFY ONE ROLE

Choose one role (faculty, mentor teacher, district partner). Define:

What are they responsible for in your current model?

Now refine: What should they be responsible for in an apprenticeship-aligned model?

5.3

TOOL

What Strong Partnerships Actually Look Like

Strong partnerships are not just well-intentioned. They are intentionally designed.

Key Characteristics

Strong partnerships often include:

- shared expectations for candidate development
- clear communication structures
- aligned goals between coursework and practice
- ongoing feedback loops
- mutual benefit for both EPP and district

WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE

A DISTRICT PARTNER

- *provides input on what candidates need to be able to do*
- *communicates regularly about candidate progress*
- *helps shape how responsibilities increase over time*

AN EPP

- *aligns coursework to those expectations, at time adjusting where in the program some experiences can actually begin so they're not only in the final stretch*
- *uses feedback from the field to adjust instruction*
- *supports both candidates and mentors*

TRY THIS: PARTNERSHIP CHECK

Instead of asking whether the following elements exist (each of them likely do), consider how strong and consistent they are in your partnerships.

PARTNERSHIP ELEMENT	EMERGING	INCONSISTENT	STRONG & INTENTIONAL
Shared expectations for candidate development	☐ Not yet clearly defined	☐ Defined but not consistently used	☐ Clearly defined and consistently guiding decisions
Regular communication between partners	☐ Minimal or ad hoc	☐ Occurs but varies in frequency or purpose	☐ Structured, consistent, and purposeful
Alignment between coursework and classroom practice	☐ Little to no alignment	☐ Some alignment, but not consistent	☐ Clearly aligned across coursework and practice
Feedback loops on candidate progress	☐ Limited or one-directional	☐ Occasional or informal	☐ Ongoing, shared, and used to improve
Mutual benefit for both EPP and district	☐ Unclear or uneven	☐ Some benefit, not fully realized	☐ Clearly valuable for both partners

REFLECT

Where are your partnerships strong and intentional?

Where are elements present — but not yet consistent or aligned?

Which area would have the greatest impact if strengthened?

Jot thoughts here:

Take it One Step Further:

Choose one area from the table.

What would it look like to move this from “inconsistent” to “strong and intentional”?

What would need to change to make that happen?

Taking It One Step Further: Sustaining Strong Partnerships

Strong partnerships are not only defined by shared goals and regular communication, they’re sustained through clarity. As apprenticeship-aligned programs grow, partnerships often become more complex. More stakeholders are involved, responsibilities expand, and the work becomes more interdependent. At this stage, alignment cannot rely on informal understanding alone.

In practice, many strong partnerships begin to formalize key elements of their work (Aligned to CAEP Standard R2) not to add bureaucracy, but to ensure continuity and shared understanding over time.

This often includes clarifying:

- how data is shared and used to support candidate development
- how mentors are selected, supported, and aligned to program expectations
- how candidate progress is evaluated across partners
- how funding and resources are coordinated
- how partners communicate and make decisions
- how the partnership continues if leadership or priorities shift

These structures strengthen shared accountability and continuity, both of which are central to CAEP expectations for clinical partnerships.

✱ CAEP ALIGNMENT

CAEP-aligned programs, these partnership structures are often formalized through Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) or similar agreements that clarify roles, expectations, data sharing, and shared accountability for candidate development.

Apprenticeship-aligned partnerships often strengthen alignment to:

CAEP Standard R2.1 (Partnerships for Clinical Preparation)

through co-designed program structures, shared responsibility for candidate development, and ongoing collaboration between EPPs and districts

CAEP Standard R2.3 (Clinical Experiences)

through structured, job-embedded learning opportunities that allow candidates to apply and develop skills in real classroom settings

These elements help ensure that clinical practice is not only well-structured, but also co-owned and continuously improved across partners.

■ REFLECT

If district leadership or institutional priorities changed tomorrow

What would protect your partnership?

What would ensure continuity for candidates and program quality?

Jot thoughts here:

5.4

TOOL

Implementation Realities & Common Challenges

Even strong designs face real-world challenges.

COMMON CHALLENGES

scheduling conflicts between coursework
and school responsibilities

inconsistent mentor support

limited time for coordination

uncertainty around roles or expectations

navigating institutional or district
constraints

COMPLEXITY BECOMES MANAGEABLE WHEN

roles are clear

partnerships are strong

and you start small

The Important Part

These are not signs that the model isn't working. They are part of implementation. You might be thinking: "This feels complex."

It is.

Starting small is often the smartest way to build a program that lasts. There are currently programs that are thriving with the OJL model, but started small by partnering with a single district, aligning one course at a time, focusing on one cohort of candidates. From there, they expanded.

KEY TAKEAWAY

You do not need perfect conditions. They don't exist. What you need is a starting point and a strong partnership.

5.5

TOOL

Reflection Prompt: Strengthening Our Partnerships

Partnerships don't become strong all at once. They develop over time through shared work, clearer expectations, and more intentional collaboration. At this point, you've explored what partnership looks like in an apprenticeship-aligned model and how your current relationships compare.

Now the goal is not to fix everything. It's to identify one place where deeper alignment could make a meaningful difference. Use the prompts below to focus your thinking and identify a next step.

Identify a Partnership.

Which partnership in or outside of your current network is most critical to this work? Why?

In your assessment, which aspects of your partnerships are currently strong? Which need to be strengthened?

Take the first step.

What is one conversation or action you could take to move this partnership forward?

KEY TAKEAWAY

Apprenticeship does not work without strong partnerships. But strong partnerships do not require perfection. They require: clarity, communication, and shared commitment

Funding, Data & Sustainability

This is where many promising efforts stall. Not because the model doesn't work but because funding, data, and sustainability are not intentionally designed from the start.

Overview

Designing a strong apprenticeship-aligned program is only part of the work. For programs to last and grow, they must also be:

financially viable	operationally manageable	and clearly demonstrating impact
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This is where many promising efforts stall. Not because the model doesn't work but because funding, data, and sustainability are not intentionally designed from the start. Apprenticeship creates an opportunity not only to align funding but to **design programs that make more efficient and effective use of existing resources.**

The Opportunity

In traditional models, funding and data are often:

siloes across different systems tied to separate goals managed independently

Apprenticeship creates an opportunity to:

- align funding streams around a shared model
- use data to inform improvement, not just reporting
- and build programs that are sustainable beyond initial pilots or grants

Sustainable programs are not built on a single funding source or one-time effort. They are built by:

aligning resources tracking what matters designing for long-term viability

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, you'll be able to:

- Identify potential funding sources that can support apprenticeship-aligned programs
- Understand how funding can be layered or “braided” to support different components
- Recognize opportunities to improve efficiency and reduce unnecessary cost through program design
- Define what data matters for both improvement and accountability
- Consider how to design programs with long-term sustainability in mind

TOOLS & PROMPTS

- 6.1 Understanding the Funding Landscape
- 6.2 Braiding Funding for Real Programs
- 6.3 What Data Actually Matters
- 6.4 From Data to Evidence: Using Your Data for Accreditation and Impact
- 6.5 Designing for Sustainability (Revenue & Cost)
- 6.6 Reflection Prompt: Making This Work Long-Term

6.1

TOOL

Understanding the Funding Landscape

Apprenticeship-aligned programs are rarely funded through a single source. Instead, they are often supported by a combination of:

education funding

workforce funding

institutional
resources

and, in some cases,
grants or incentives

What This Means

Different funding sources often support different parts of the model:

- coursework and instruction
- work-based learning or stipends
- program coordination and support
- candidate services

Understanding this landscape helps EPPs:

- identify opportunities they may not have considered
- partner more effectively with districts and workforce organizations
- and design programs that are financially realistic

WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE

A program might:

- *use institutional or tuition-based funding to support coursework*
- *partner with a district to support candidate employment*
- *access workforce funds to support wraparound services or stipends*

TRY THIS: MAP YOUR CURRENT FUNDING

Think about your current program. Where does funding already exist?

PROGRAM COMPONENT	CURRENT FUNDING SOURCE	POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES
Coursework (RTI)		
Clinical / OJL		
Candidate support		
Program coordination		

REFLECT

Where are you already resourced? Where might new opportunities exist?

KEY TAKEAWAY

Funding here is not about finding one solution. It is about understanding how different resources can support different parts of the model.

6.2

TOOL

Braiding Funding for Real Programs

Funding streams are often designed for specific purposes. But apprenticeship-aligned programs cut across those purposes.

The Shift

Instead of treating funding sources separately, programs can begin to:

align them around a shared goal

A Quick Orientation to Funding Sources

Not all funding is controlled by the same people — or accessed in the same way. Understanding who holds the funding is just as important as understanding what it can support.

For example:

- **Education funding** is typically controlled by institutions and tied to coursework and instruction
- **District funding** supports salaries, staffing, and local priorities
- **Workforce funding** (such as WIOA) is often managed by regional workforce boards and supports training, placement, and wraparound services
- **Grants and philanthropy** may support innovation, pilot programs, or expansion

Each source has its own requirements, timelines, and decision-makers. Which means aligning funding is not just a design task — It is also a partnership and conversation task.

What this Looks Like

FUNDING SOURCE TYPE	WHAT IT CAN SUPPORT
Education funding	Coursework, faculty, program delivery
Workforce funding	Work-based learning, stipends, support services
District investment	Salaries, mentorship, local coordination
Grants & philanthropy	Startup costs, innovation, pilot support, expansion

When funding is aligned:

programs become more stable	partners have clearer roles	sustainability becomes more realistic
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■ SUPPORT AVAILABLE

Aligning funding is also a partnership and conversation task. Craft is one free option for support in mapping which resources can support which parts of your model — craftededucation.com/schedule.

■ TRY THIS: CONNECT THE PIECES

Look back at the funding table from the previous section — or think broadly about how different parts of your program are currently supported.

Step 1: Spot the Gaps

Where do you see potential connections between: program components and possible funding sources

Step 2: Identify Who Holds the Key

Who would you need to talk to in order to better understand or access these resources?

- ☐ District leader (HR, finance, or leadership)
- ☐ Workforce board or workforce partner
- ☐ Institutional leadership
- ☐ External partner or funder
- ☐ Not sure yet

Step 3: Start the Conversation

What is one question you could ask to better understand how funding might support this work?

KEY INSIGHT

District investment is often one of the most critical components of sustainable programs, particularly when candidates are employed and supported within schools. While other funding sources can support or enhance the model, district commitment (through hiring, compensation, and ongoing support) often determines whether programs can scale and last.

6.2a

TOOL

Reframing Apprenticeship as a Revenue-Positive Model

One of the most common assumptions about apprenticeship-aligned programs is that they are more expensive to operate.

In reality, when designed intentionally, these models can shift from cost centers to more sustainable, and in some cases revenue-positive, program structures.

This doesn't happen automatically. It happens through alignment.

The Shift

TRADITIONAL MODELS OFTEN RELY ON

tuition as the primary revenue source
unpaid clinical experiences that contribute to attrition
limited coordination with workforce or employer funding

APPRENTICESHIP-ALIGNED MODELS CREATE THE OPPORTUNITY TO

align multiple funding streams
reduce inefficiencies in program design
and increase candidate persistence and completion

What Drives Sustainability (and Potential Revenue Positivity)

In practice, this shift is often driven by a combination of factors:

1

Tuition + Workforce Funding Alignment

Programs can layer institutional funding with workforce investments (e.g., WIOA, grants, state initiatives) to support different parts of the model

2

District Cost-Sharing

Districts are not just placement sites—they are employers with hiring needs. This creates opportunities for shared investment in candidate development (e.g., salaries, mentorship, incentives)

3

Reduced Candidate Attrition

When candidates are paid, supported, and learning in relevant, real-world contexts they are significantly more likely to persist and complete programs

4

Higher Persistence = More Stable Revenue

Improved retention strengthens tuition continuity, cohort stability, and long-term program viability

What This Means for Program Design

This is not about “adding funding.” It is about designing programs where:

- resources are aligned instead of duplicated
- candidates can afford to complete the program
- and partners share investment in outcomes

In these models, sustainability is not an afterthought. It is built into the structure.

■ TRY THIS: REFRAME YOUR MODEL

Think about your current program. Where do you see:

- ☐ lost revenue due to candidate attrition?
- ☐ costs that could be shared with partners?
- ☐ funding streams that are currently disconnected?

Where might alignment change the equation?

KEY INSIGHT

Apprenticeship does not guarantee a revenue-positive model. But it creates the conditions where:

**sustainability becomes more achievable
and financial models become more flexible**

6.3

TOOL

What Data Actually Matters

Data is already a central part of educator preparation programs (Aligned to CAEP Standards R2, R3, and R5). The question is not whether data is being collected, it's whether that data is being used in ways that improve programs, support candidates, and demonstrate impact.

The Challenge

Most programs are required to track data for:

accreditation (e.g.,
CAEP)

state reporting

grant requirements

institutional
accountability

This often results in:

- multiple systems collecting similar information
- data being reported after the fact
- limited connection between data and real-time decision-making

The Opportunity

Apprenticeship-aligned programs create an opportunity to (CAEP R5.1, R5.4):

- connect data across systems instead of treating it separately
- use data in real time to support candidate development
- and tell a clearer story of impact, especially in classrooms

INSTEAD OF ASKING

“What do we have to report?”

APPRENTICESHIP-ALIGNED PROGRAMS ALSO

ASK

**“What do we need to
know to improve?”**

While all programs are teeming with data, strong programs tend to focus on a few key categories of data — not because they are the only ones required, but because they are the most useful for decision-making.

Core Data Categories

CANDIDATE PROGRESSION	PROGRAM EXPERIENCE	RETENTION & COMPLETION	EMPLOYMENT & PLACEMENT	PARTNER FEEDBACK
How are candidates developing skills over time? Where are they improving? Where are they struggling?	Are coursework and clinical experiences aligned? Are candidates able to apply what they are learning?	Are candidates staying in the program? Where are they exiting or getting stuck?	Are candidates being hired? Are they staying in the profession?	What are districts and mentors seeing? Where do they need stronger preparation?

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

As programs begin to focus on these data categories, they often find new opportunities to track and understand impact more clearly. For example:

- *Candidate progression may include tracking skill development alongside apprentice wage progression over time*
- *Retention and completion can extend beyond program completion to include teacher retention at 1–3 years*
- *Partner feedback may include structured employer or district satisfaction surveys*
- *Program impact can be reflected in indicators such as vacancy reduction, particularly in hard-to-staff roles or schools*
- *Classroom impact may include performance metrics tied to candidate development and instructional practice*

These examples are not additional requirements — They are ways to make existing data more meaningful, connected, and actionable.

■ IMPORTANT NOTE

These categories do not replace required reporting. They sit alongside it and help programs make better decisions in real time.

* CAEP ALIGNMENT

For CAEP-accredited providers, this data can also be disaggregated by pathway (e.g., apprenticeship vs traditional), candidate demographics, and program format to support deeper analysis and continuous improvement.

WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE

Instead of reviewing data only at the end of a program, faculty and partners might:

- *discuss candidate progress during the semester*
- *adjust coursework based on what candidates are experiencing in classrooms*
- *use feedback from mentors to strengthen instruction*
- *identify patterns early and respond before issues grow*

REAL OPPORTUNITY

Apprenticeship models make it easier to see the direct impact of preparation on classroom practice, because candidates are working in real settings while they learn. Because candidates are working in real settings while they learn, programs have more opportunities to collect ongoing evidence of development, rather than relying solely on end-of-program measures.

This creates a stronger connection between what programs teach, what candidates do and what students experience.

* CAEP ALIGNMENT • A NOTE ON ACCREDITATION

This kind of real-time, practice-based data also strengthens alignment to accreditation expectations, including:

CAEP Standard R2 (Clinical Partnerships & Practice)

CAEP Standard R5 (Quality Assurance & Continuous Improvement)

Why This Matters

Stronger, more connected data doesn't just support program improvement.

It also helps programs:

- demonstrate value to district and workforce partners
- strengthen cases for funding and investment
- and build more sustainable program models over time

**Data becomes part of the program's value
—not just a reporting requirement**

* CAEP ALIGNMENT • STRENGTHENING PROGRAM IMPACT EVIDENCE

Apprenticeship-aligned models create more consistent opportunities to see candidate learning in real time. As you consider your current data and reporting:

How could apprenticeship strengthen your evidence across CAEP Standards R2, R3, and R5?

Consider:

- Where do you currently rely on end-of-program data?
- What additional insight could real-time, job-embedded data provide?
- How might this strengthen your ability to support candidate development and program improvement?

JOT NOTES

TRY THIS: MAKE YOUR DATA WORK FOR YOU

Think about the data your program already collects. In apprenticeship-aligned pathways, programs may also consider how to disaggregate data to better understand candidate experiences and outcomes within this model. Examining how candidates develop within apprenticeship pathways—and how that experience differs from other program models—can provide insight into what is working, where candidates may need additional support, and how the program can continue to leverage assets and improve.

Step 1: Inventory

Where does your data currently live?

- ☐ Accreditation reports
- ☐ State reporting systems
- ☐ Course-level data
- ☐ District or partner feedback
- ☐ Multiple systems that don't talk to each other

Step 2: Identify Disconnects

Where is data collected — but not directly used to inform decisions?

Step 3: Choose One Focus

What is one type of data that, if used more intentionally, could improve your program?

Step 4: Put It Into Practice

How could you bring that data into a conversation or decision point?

KEY INSIGHT

You are already collecting data. The opportunity is to: connect it, use it more intentionally and regularly, align it to what actually matters for candidate growth and program improvement

6.4

TOOL

From Data to Evidence: Using Your Data for Accreditation and Impact

Apprenticeship-aligned programs naturally generate rich data on candidate development, clinical practice, and program outcomes. The opportunity is not just to collect this data — but to translate it into clear, usable evidence for accreditation, reporting, and continuous improvement.

For many programs, accreditation can feel like a separate process that requires additional documentation. In reality, when apprenticeship is designed intentionally, much of the required evidence is already embedded in your program.

DATA CATEGORY	WHAT YOU'RE ALREADY COLLECTING	WHAT IT SHOWS (EVIDENCE)	HOW IT CONNECTS TO ACCREDITATION
Candidate Progression	Observations, evaluations, competency tracking, mentor feedback	Growth over time, skill development, readiness to teach	Candidate competency development
Program Experience	Coursework aligned to practice, reflections, clinical integration	Coherence between instruction and practice	Clinical depth and program design
Retention & Completion	Enrollment, persistence, completion rates	Candidate success and program support	Program effectiveness
Employment & Placement	Hiring data, placement rates	Workforce alignment and outcomes	Candidate & Completer impact
Partner Feedback	Mentor input, district feedback	External validation of readiness	Continuous improvement

* CAEP ALIGNMENT

These data sources align directly with CAEP expectations for demonstrating candidate competency, program effectiveness, and impact on P–12 learners.

Apply It: Turning Data into Evidence

- 1 Where are you already collecting data that demonstrates candidate growth and impact?
 - 2 How might you organize or elevate that data to align with accreditation or reporting expectations?
 - 3 How would you describe your apprenticeship-aligned model and its outcomes in your next self-study, program review, or partner report?
-

■ TRY THIS: FROM DATA TO NARRATIVE — DRAFT YOUR EVIDENCE STATEMENT

Use your responses below to generate a draft paragraph you can use in: accreditation reports, program reviews, partner updates

Step 1: Choose One Data Area

- ☐ Candidate Progression ☐ Program Experience ☐ Retention & Completion
☐ Employment & Placement ☐ Partner Feedback

Step 2: Ground It in Your Program

What data do you currently collect in this area? What patterns or strengths are you seeing? What does this say about your candidates or program?

Step 3: Draft Your Narrative

Now complete:

Our program collects and analyzes data related to [data category], including [specific data sources]. This data indicates that candidates are [key insight — developing skills, applying learning, being hired]. These findings demonstrate [connection to program quality, impact, or alignment], and inform ongoing improvements in [coursework, clinical practice, partnerships, etc.].

6.5

TOOL

Designing for Sustainability

Sustainability is not something that happens later. It is something that is designed from the beginning.

Programs are more likely to last when they:

- align to real workforce needs
- provide clear value to partners
- are financially viable
- and are manageable within existing structures

You might be thinking: “We’ll figure the sustainability part out after we pilot.” And yes, pilots are important. But sustainability improves when design decisions consider long-term viability, partnerships are built with shared benefit and funding is aligned early.

WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE

A program began with a small pilot — but from the beginning it

- *Aligns coursework to district needs*
- *Builds in mentor support*
- *Identifies multiple funding sources*

As a result, it will be able to expand without starting over.

■ TRY THIS: PRESSURE-TEST YOUR IDEA

Look back at your starting point from Lesson 3. Does it:

- ☐ Align to a real workforce need
- ☐ Provide value to both EPP and district
- ☐ Fit within existing structures
- ☐ Have potential funding pathways

■ REFLECT

Which area feels strongest? Which needs more attention?

■ KEY TAKEAWAY

Sustainability is not a separate step. It is part of good design.

6.6

TOOL

Reflection Prompt: Making This Work Long-Term

Before You Begin

Strong programs don't become sustainable by accident. They become sustainable because:

resources are
aligned

data is used
intentionally

design considers long-term
impact

Step 1: Identify Your Strength

Where is your program already positioned well for sustainability?

Step 2: Identify Your Gap

What is the biggest challenge or unknown?

Step 3: Take a Step

What is one action you could take to move toward sustainability?

Action Planning & Next Steps

07

Start where you are. Use what's helpful. Adapt what you need. This is your launchpad.

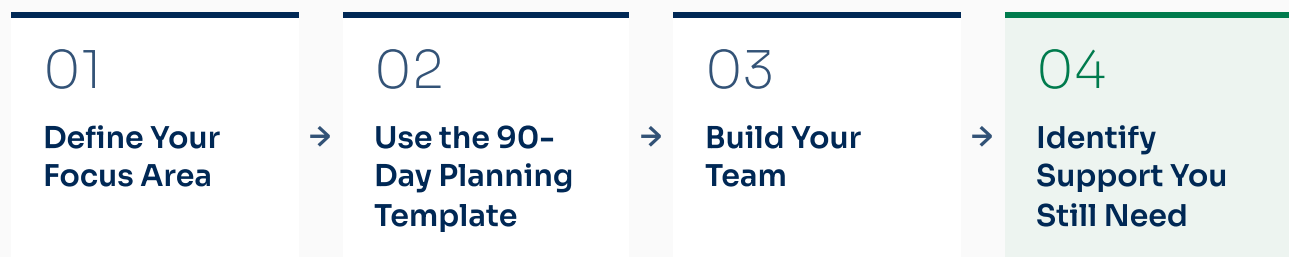
Overview

This is where it all comes together. You've explored what apprenticeship is, how it connects to your program, and how partnerships, funding, and design work together.

Now it's time to move from ideas to action. This section provides flexible tools to help you:

- identify your starting point
- plan your first steps
- and begin building momentum

THE FOUR STEPS



01 Define Your Focus Area

Let's begin by grounding your work.

What program, pathway, or partnership will you focus on first?

Example: Elementary or Secondary Teacher Preparation, Special Education, Residency or paraprofessional-to-teacher pathway, A specific district partnership

Our Focus Area:

02 Use the 90-Day Planning Template

The table below helps you map out your first 90 days of implementation.

Use it on your own or with a team. Keep it flexible and adapt it to your setting—your goal is direction, not perfection.

■ WANT TO GO DIGITAL?

You can recreate this table in a Google Doc or Sheet for easy collaboration.

PHASE	DAYS	KEY ACTIVITIES	PARTNERS INVOLVED	RESOURCES NEEDED	HOW YOU'LL KNOW IT'S WORKING
Foundation	1–30	Example: Identify district partner, map current coursework to practice	District partner, faculty	Course maps, partnership contacts	Initial alignment identified
Design	31–60	Redesign one course or assignment, clarify roles	Faculty, district	Assignment templates, feedback loops	Draft design completed
Launch Prep	61–90	Pilot with small group, gather feedback	School admin, employers	Recruitment flyer, info session deck	Students signed up and onboarding ready

03 Build Your Team

Great programs are built by great teams. Use the table below to identify the people and partners who will help bring this vision to life.

ROLE	NAME	ORGANIZATION	CONTACT INFO
Internal Champion			
Faculty Lead			
District Partner			
Mentor Teacher Lead			
Workforce / External Partner (if applicable)			

04 Identify Support You Still Need

No one has it all figured out. What’s still unclear? What questions, barriers, or unknowns still exist? Where would additional support help you move forward with confidence?

Use this space to list questions or barriers—we’ve left plenty of room to reflect.

Questions/Barriers We Need Help With:

Ready for more tools? The following planning templates help you stay organized and on track. Use what’s helpful. Leave out what isn’t. Tweak what you need. This is your roadmap.

Use these plug-and-play tools to streamline your planning process.

TEMPLATE 01

Partner Engagement Planner

Use this tool to map and manage key stakeholder relationships.

PARTNER NAME	TYPE	CONTACT INFO	STATUS Not Contacted
ROLE IN THE PROJECT	NEXT STEPS	NOTES	

PARTNER NAME	TYPE	CONTACT INFO	STATUS Not started
ROLE IN THE PROJECT	NEXT STEPS	NOTES	

PARTNER NAME	TYPE	CONTACT INFO	STATUS Not started
ROLE IN THE PROJECT	NEXT STEPS	NOTES	

PARTNER NAME	TYPE	CONTACT INFO	STATUS Not started
ROLE IN THE PROJECT	NEXT STEPS	NOTES	

PARTNER NAME	TYPE	CONTACT INFO	STATUS Not started
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PARTNER NAME	TYPE	CONTACT INFO	STATUS Not started
ROLE IN THE PROJECT	NEXT STEPS	NOTES	

PARTNER NAME	TYPE	CONTACT INFO	STATUS Not started
ROLE IN THE PROJECT	NEXT STEPS	NOTES	

PARTNER NAME	TYPE	CONTACT INFO	STATUS Not started
ROLE IN THE PROJECT	NEXT STEPS	NOTES	

TEMPLATE 02

Curriculum Alignment Worksheet

This helps educators crosswalk existing coursework to RAP competencies.

COURSE TITLE	LEARNING OBJECTIVE	PRACTICE APPLICATION	ALIGNED? (Y/N)	ADJUSTMENTS NEEDED	NOTES

PRO TIP

Start with one course—not your entire program. Most EPPs are closer than they think. Focus on identifying where learning is already showing up in practice, then strengthen that connection before trying to redesign everything.

TEMPLATE 03

Pilot Planning Snapshot

This helps educators crosswalk existing coursework to RAP competencies. Adjust to better reflect your program as needed.

ITEM	DETAILS
Focus Pathway	E.g., Health Sciences, Teaching, IT
Target Start Date	
Number of Students	
Grade Level(s)	
Key Employer/RAP Partner	
Key Postsecondary Partner	
Apprenticeship Components	☐ Coursework (RTI) ☐ Job-Embedded Practice (OJL) ☐ Mentorship ☐ Partnership Alignment ☐ Candidate Support
Next 3 Milestones	
Potential Challenges	
Supports Needed	

TEMPLATE 04

Success Tracker / Implementation Checklist

MILESTONE	DATE	STATUS	NOTES
Secure RAP Sponsor Partnership	Date	Not started	
Curriculum Crosswalk Complete	Date	Not started	
Hold Planning Meeting with Partners	Date	Not started	
Finalize Student Recruitment	Date	Not started	
Launch pilot	Date	Not started	
	Date	Not started	
	Date	Not started	
	Date	Not started	

■ SUPPORT AVAILABLE

Working these templates with a partner? Craft offers free support on program design and on drafting Appendix A — craftededucation.com/schedule.

FAQs & Troubleshooting

Every new initiative raises questions—especially when it touches program design, partnerships, funding, and accreditation. This section addresses common questions from educator preparation programs exploring apprenticeship-aligned models.

The goal is not just to provide answers — but to clarify misconceptions, reduce uncertainty, and help you move forward with confidence.

QUESTION INDEX

Q1	Do we have to become a Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) sponsor?	114	Q11	Isn't this more expensive to implement?	117
Q2	Does this require full program approval or a major redesign?	114	Q12	What role do districts play in this model?	117
Q3	How does this align with accreditation requirements (e.g., CAEP)?	114	Q13	Do we need to track new types of data?	117
Q4	Do apprenticeship pathways need to be reported separately for accreditation?	115	Q14	How do apprenticeships affect Carnegie unit or credit hour requirements?	118
Q5	Does apprenticeship change licensure or accreditation authority?	115	Q15	Can apprentices serve as teachers of record?	118
Q6	What if our faculty are resistant to this shift?	115	Q16	How does apprenticeship interact with union agreements?	119
Q7	What if we don't have strong district partnerships yet?	116	Q17	What happens if an apprentice is dismissed by a district?	119
Q8	How is this different from student teaching or residency models?	116	Q18	Does apprenticeship lower academic rigor?	119
Q9	What if our candidates are already working in schools?	116	Q19	Do we have to change everything at once?	119
Q10	How do we start if we don't have clear funding yet?	117			

Q1 Do we have to become a Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) sponsor?

No. Most EPPs do not start by becoming a RAP sponsor. Instead, they often begin by partnering with an existing sponsor, serving as a Related Technical Instruction (RTI) provider, or aligning their program to support an apprenticeship pathway. Over time, some institutions may choose to take on a larger role — but that is not required to get started.

Q2 Does this require full program approval or a major redesign?

Not necessarily. Many apprenticeship-aligned shifts can happen within your existing program structure, such as:

- redesigning assignments to be more practice-based
- aligning coursework more directly to classroom experience
- strengthening partnerships with districts

In some cases, more formal approval may be needed later — but most programs can begin with small, meaningful changes that do not require immediate approval.

Q3 How does this align with accreditation requirements (e.g., CAEP)?

Apprenticeship-aligned models often strengthen alignment with accreditation expectations, particularly around:

- clinical partnerships (CAEP Standard R2)
- candidate development and demonstrated readiness through clinical practice (CAEP Standards R2 and R3)
- coherence between coursework and practice

The key is not adding new requirements — it's making existing expectations more visible, measurable, and connected. Additional alignment can be demonstrated across CAEP Standards R1, R3, and R5 depending on program design.

Q4 Do apprenticeship pathways need to be reported separately for accreditation?

In many cases, yes. Apprenticeship pathways are typically treated as a distinct pathway within an EPP. This means programs may disaggregate data, analyze outcomes, and compare results across pathways to demonstrate that all candidates meet the same standards. This is consistent with how CAEP expects programs to report across locations, modalities, or program types.

Q5 Does apprenticeship change licensure or accreditation authority?

No. Apprenticeship operates alongside existing systems:

- licensure requirements are still defined by the state
- accreditation standards still guide program quality
- institutions still oversee coursework and degree conferral

Apprenticeship connects these systems — it does not replace them.

Q6 What if our faculty are resistant to this shift?

That's a common and understandable concern. This work is not about replacing faculty expertise — it's about expanding how that expertise is applied. Faculty remain instructors of record and are responsible for academic instruction and evaluation. Mentor teachers support on-the-job learning, but they do not replace faculty.

In many cases, apprenticeship increases the visibility and impact of faculty work by connecting coursework more directly to classroom practice. Many programs begin by piloting changes in one course, inviting faculty into the design process, and focusing on improving relevance for candidates. Over time, alignment often grows as the benefits become clear.

Q7 What if we don't have strong district partnerships yet?

You can still start. Apprenticeship-aligned models often create an opportunity to build new partnerships, especially when aligned to local hiring needs, teacher shortages, or Grow Your Own efforts. Start with one district, one conversation, or one shared goal. Partnerships deepen through doing — not just planning.

Q8 How is this different from student teaching or residency models?

It builds on them—but shifts the structure. Traditional models often concentrate clinical experience at the end or separate coursework from practice. Apprenticeship-aligned models distribute learning across the entire experience, connect coursework to daily practice, and align progression over time. It's not a replacement — It's a more integrated and continuous approach.

Q9 What if our candidates are already working in schools?

That's a strong starting point—but not the same as an apprenticeship model. The difference is intentional design. In apprenticeship-aligned programs:

- candidate roles are connected to learning goals
- progression is structured over time
- and coursework reinforces daily practice

It's not just that candidates are working, it's how that work is used for learning and development.

Q10 How do we start if we don't have clear funding yet?

Start with design and partnerships. Many programs begin by aligning existing coursework, piloting with a small group, and identifying partners. Funding often becomes clearer as partnerships develop, roles are defined, and program structure takes shape

In many cases, sustainable models emerge through braided funding, district investment and improved candidate retention, you don't need every funding source identified to begin.

Q11 Isn't this more expensive to implement?

Not necessarily. While there may be upfront design considerations, apprenticeship-aligned models can become more sustainable over time through alignment of multiple funding sources, district cost-sharing, and improved persistence and completion. When designed intentionally, these models can shift from cost-heavy structures to more stable and sustainable program models.

Q12 What role do districts play in this model?

A critical one. Districts employ candidates, provide mentorship and daily learning experiences, and help define what candidates need to be able to do. In many cases, district investment—through hiring, compensation, and support—is a key driver of long-term sustainability.

Q13 Do we need to track new types of data?

Not necessarily new — but more connected and more useful. Most programs already collect data. Apprenticeship-aligned models create opportunities to use data in real time, connect it across systems, and better understand candidate development and program impact.

Q14 How do apprenticeships affect Carnegie unit or credit hour requirements?

Apprenticeship-aligned models can be designed within existing credit-bearing structures. In many cases, on-the-job learning (OJL) is embedded within coursework, clinical experiences, or field-based requirements that already carry credit.

The goal is not to replace credit hour structures — but to better connect them to real, job-embedded learning. Programs typically work within institutional and federal guidelines to ensure compliance while increasing relevance.

Q15 Can apprentices serve as teachers of record?

This depends on state policy, district decisions, and licensure requirements. In many cases, apprentices are employed in roles such as paraprofessionals, co-teachers, or residents while working toward full licensure. Some states and districts may allow expanded responsibilities under specific conditions, but this varies.

The key is alignment with:

- state licensure rules
- district policies
- and program design

Q16 How does apprenticeship interact with union agreements?

Apprenticeship models operate within existing labor and union structures. In many cases, collaboration with unions is an important part of successful program design, particularly when roles, compensation, and responsibilities are evolving. Strong programs engage union partners early to ensure alignment and support.

Q17 What happens if an apprentice is dismissed by a district?

This is a really important consideration and one that should be addressed through program design and partnership agreements. In practice, programs often define clear expectations for performance and conduct, establish communication and intervention protocols, and outline next steps if a placement ends

Depending on the situation, this may include:

- reassignment
- additional support
- or program-level decisions about continuation

Clarity between partners helps ensure consistency and fairness.

Q18 Does apprenticeship lower academic rigor?

No. Apprenticeship-aligned models do not reduce rigor — they make it more visible and applied. Faculty remain responsible for academic instruction, assessment, and maintaining program standards

What changes is how candidates demonstrate learning:

- through real classroom practice
- through application of concepts
- and through ongoing development over time

In many cases, this leads to stronger (NOT WEAKER) evidence of candidate readiness.

Q19 Do we have to change everything at once?

No! In fact, most successful programs don't. They start with one course, one partnership, and/or one group of candidates then build from there. Progress matters more than perfection.

* CAEP ALIGNMENT

These considerations reflect common implementation questions aligned to CAEP Standards R2 (partnerships), R3 (candidate progression), and R5 (continuous improvement and program quality).

Common Pitfalls to Avoid

- **Going it alone.** Bring employers and postsecondary partners in early. Don't build in a vacuum.
 - **Overengineering the pilot.** Start small. Focus on one course, one shift, or one pilot. Scale from what works.
 - **Treating this as an “add-on”.** Start small. Focus on one course, one shift, or one pilot. Scale from what works.
 - **Focusing only on funding.** Funding is mission critical, but design, partnerships, and structure matters just as much (and can unlock further funding).
 - **Underestimating candidates.** With proper support, candidates rise to expectations, especially when learning is relevant, applied, and connected to real work.
 - **Waiting for perfect conditions.** You don't need everything aligned to begin. Start with what's possible and build from there.
-

If you're unsure where to begin:

- revisit your focus area (Section 6)
- identify one small shift you can test
- and start one conversation with a partner

Momentum builds through action.

Still Stuck? Get Support

You're never alone in this work. For questions about program design, implementation, or apprenticeship alignment, you can reach out to:

Craft Education Team

Craft is one free option for ongoing program support.

EMAIL [Contact Form](#) WEB [Crafteducation.com](#)

National Center for Apprenticeship Degrees (NCAD)

Focused on scaling high-quality, credit-bearing apprenticeship degrees, NCAD supports EPPs and IHEs building toward apprenticeship degree pathways.

WEB [NCAD.org](#)

National Center for Grow Your Own (NCGYO)

NCGYO helps states, districts, and preparation programs design, scale, and sustain inclusive "Grow Your Own" teacher pipelines.

WEB [NCGYO.org](#)

You can also connect with your RAP sponsor, [State Apprenticeship Agency \(SAA\)](#), local workforce board, or regional intermediary. Many are eager to help you bring high-quality pathways to life.

■ NEED HELP FINDING THE RIGHT PARTNER?

[Craft](#) is happy to support you in identifying organizations that best fit your program's needs. While national centers like the National Center for Apprenticeship Degrees (NCAD) and the National Center for Grow Your Own (NCGYO) are excellent starting points, they're just two of many. If they're not the right fit, Craft can help connect you with additional partners aligned to your goals, pathway, or region.

Institutional Readiness Scorecard

Rate 1–5:

Leadership buy-in	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
District partnership strength	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Faculty openness	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Accreditation alignment clarity	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
Funding understanding	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

Total score → Suggested next move (Explore / Design / Pilot / Scale)

FINAL REFLECTION

What feels most possible now?

What still feels risky?

Resources

This section houses key tools, templates, and references to support your planning, partnership development, and implementation of apprenticeship-aligned educator preparation programs.

Use these materials as you move from exploration to design, pilot, and scale.

A	Partnership & Outreach Tools	124
B	Program Design & Alignment Tools	126
C	Data & Evidence Planning Tool	127
D	Apprenticeship Standards & Registration Resources	128
E	Glossary of Key Terms	128
F	Registered Teacher Apprenticeships and Writing to CAEP Standards (CAEP)	129
G	Additional Practitioner Resources	129

A Partnership & Outreach Tools

1 · INITIAL OUTREACH EMAIL TO DISTRICT OR APPRENTICESHIP PARTNER

Subject: Exploring Partnership Opportunities in Teacher Apprenticeship

Dear [District or Partner Name],

My name is [Your Name], and I support [Your Institution/Program Name] in preparing future educators. We are exploring ways to strengthen our program through apprenticeship-aligned models that connect coursework with real, job-embedded teaching experience.

Given your role in supporting educator development, we would value the opportunity to explore potential partnership alignment, particularly around mentorship, clinical experiences, and candidate pathways into teaching roles.

Would you be open to a 30-minute conversation to explore possibilities? We would be glad to share more about our program and learn about your priorities to identify where our work might align.

Warmly,
[Your Name]

2 · INFO SESSION INVITE (CANDIDATES, DISTRICTS, OR COMMUNITY)

Subject Line: You're Invited! Learn About Our Teacher Apprenticeship Pathway

Join us to learn how candidates can earn, learn, and lead through a program that connects coursework with real classroom experience.

At this session, you'll learn:

What teacher apprenticeships are and how they work

How candidates can earn while completing their degree

What districts and partners need to know

How to get involved

Date:

Time:

Location/Link:

3 · PARTNERSHIP PLANNING MEETING TEMPLATE

■ **EPP–District Apprenticeship Planning Session**

A seven-part agenda: welcome and introductions; program overview (EPP); district context and workforce needs; apprenticeship model overview; points of alignment; data, evaluation and accountability; partnership structure and roles.

4 · SAMPLE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU): EPP–DISTRICT APPRENTICESHIP PARTNERSHIP

■ **NOTE**

this is a starting template, not legal advice. Have your institution’s legal or contracts office review before signing. It’s also intentionally broad and modular — built to flex whether your partnership is a light RTI-only arrangement or a full registered apprenticeship, so expect to trim sections that don’t apply and add specificity where they do.

■ **Memorandum of Understanding — [EPP / Institution Name] and [District/School System Name]**

Modular sections: purpose; roles and responsibilities (EPP, District, optional RAP sponsor/intermediary); program components; data sharing; term, renewal and termination; signatures.

B Program Design & Alignment Tools

1 • COMPETENCY & COURSEWORK ALIGNMENT TOOL

Use this tool to map your existing courses to competencies or apprenticeship standards.

COURSE	KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES	RELATED COMPETENCY	OJL CONNECTION	NOTES

2 • COMPETENCY & COURSEWORK ALIGNMENT TOOL

Use this tool to shift coursework toward real-world application.

TRADITIONAL ASSIGNMENT	PRACTICE-BASED ALTERNATIVE	REAL CONTEXT	EVIDENCE PRODUCED

RESOURCES

3 · CREDENTIAL & PATHWAY MAPPING TOOL

Map how candidates progress through your program.

STAGE	CREDENTIAL OR MILESTONE	WHEN EARNED	NEXT STEP

C Data & Evidence Planning Tool

1 · DATA ALIGNMENT PLANNING TOOL

Use this to align what you collect with what matters for improvement and accreditation. Examples may include:

- Candidate progression
- Retention and completion
- Employment outcomes
- Employer feedback
- Classroom impact

DATA CATEGORY	CURRENT SOURCE	POTENTIAL ENHANCEMENT	CAEP ALIGNMENT

■ PRO TIP

Apprenticeship-aligned models often make it easier to collect real-time, job-embedded data, strengthening evidence for CAEP Standard R4 (Program Impact) and Standard R5 (Continuous Improvement).

D Apprenticeship Standards & Registration Resources

1 • REGISTERED TEACHER APPRENTICESHIP STANDARDS

National Guideline Standards (Pathways Alliance / DOL) · State-specific standards (varies by SAA)

2 • APPENDIX A & PROGRAM REGISTRATION SUPPORT

USDOL sample documents and the Craft Rapid Register. Upload your program information and generate a draft Appendix A to support registration or alignment work.

LINK [USDOL Sample Appendix A](#)

LINK [USDOL Sample RAP Standards](#)

LINK craftededucation.com/rapid-register

3 • RAP SPONSOR SEARCH TOOL

LINK <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/partner-finder>

4 • SAA/OA STATE LOOKUP TOOL

LINK <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/about-us/apprenticeship-system>

E Glossary of Key Terms

1 • QUICK REFERENCE TERM LIST

A full glossary was provided in the Introduction, but is also listed here for quick reference.

The full 25-term glossary appears in the front matter at pages xiii–xiv, covering Accreditation Standards through Wage Progression. Terms most used in the lessons: OJL, RTI, RAP, RAP Sponsor, SAA, OA, ATR, Journeyworker, Mentor Teacher, Faculty of Record, Teacher of Record, CBE, CPL, Pre-Apprenticeship, Stackable Credentials, Time-Based Model, Wage Progression.

F Registered Teacher Apprenticeships and Writing to CAEP Standards (CAEP)

1 • CAEP GUIDANCE RESOURCE

* REGISTERED TEACHER APPRENTICESHIPS & CAEP STANDARDS

A guidance resource that supports educator preparation providers in aligning apprenticeship pathways to CAEP standards, including examples of evidence and key considerations for documentation and reporting.

[LINK Registered Teacher Apprenticeships and Writing to CAEP Standards \(CAEP\)](#)

G Additional Practitioner Resources

1 • U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR APPRENTICESHIP TOOLKIT

Guidance on building and registering apprenticeship programs

2 • BUILDING REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS (ASPEN / DOL)

Step-by-step guidance on program design, partnerships, and implementation

3 • ADVANCE CTE & WORKFORCE RESOURCES

(Useful for understanding broader apprenticeship ecosystem and policy alignment)

APPENDIX

CAEP Alignment Crosswalk: Apprenticeship–Aligned EPP Design

✱ HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

This crosswalk is designed to help Educator Preparation Programs connect apprenticeship–aligned design decisions to CAEP Standards. It can be used to support:

self-study reports	accreditation evidence organization
internal program review	partnership conversations

TABLE 1 · PAGE 132

CAEP Standards Alignment Table

Standards R1–R5 against what CAEP expects, where it lives in the playbook, and the evidence it generates.

TABLE 2 · PAGE 133

**Crosswalk by Key
Apprenticeship Components**

Each apprenticeship element mapped to the standards it supports, and why it matters.

CAEP Standards Alignment Table

CAEP STANDARD	WHAT CAEP EXPECTS	WHERE THIS LIVES IN YOUR PLAYBOOK	WHAT EVIDENCE THIS GENERATES
Standard R1: Content & Pedagogical Knowledge	Candidates demonstrate deep understanding and application of content and pedagogy	Lesson 3 (RTI alignment, assignment redesign), Lesson 4 (competencies)	Practice-based assignments, applied coursework, competency demonstrations in real classrooms
Standard R2: Clinical Partnerships & Practice	Strong, co-constructed partnerships and high-quality clinical experiences	Lesson 2 (roles), Lesson 3 (OJL), Lesson 5 (partnership design, MOUs)	Co-designed clinical experiences, mentor structures, shared expectations, partnership agreements
Standard R3: Candidate Quality, Recruitment & Selectivity	High-quality candidates are recruited, supported, and developed	Lesson 1 (access + pathways), Lesson 3 (progression), Lesson 6 (retention)	Candidate progression data, recruitment pathways (GYO), persistence and completion trends
Standard R4: Program Impact	Completers positively impact P–12 learners and are effective in the field	Lesson 6 (data + impact), FAQ (Standard 4 reflection), data-to-evidence section	Employment outcomes, retention at 1–3 years, employer satisfaction, classroom impact data
Standard R5: Quality Assurance & Continuous Improvement	Programs use data to drive ongoing improvement	Lesson 6 (data systems, dashboards), readiness scorecard, continuous feedback loops	Real-time data use, improvement cycles, partner feedback integration, program adjustments

Crosswalk by Key Apprenticeship Components

APPRENTICESHIP ELEMENT	CAEP ALIGNMENT	WHY IT MATTERS
On-the-Job Learning (OJL)	Standard R2, Standard R3	Provides continuous, real-world clinical evidence and impact data
Related Technical Instruction (RTI)	Standard R1	Ensures coursework is applied, rigorous, and connected to practice
Competency Progression	Standard R1, Standard R3	Demonstrates candidate development over time, not just at completion
Employer Co-Design	Standard R2, Standard R5	Strengthens partnerships and shared accountability
Data & Feedback Loops	Standard R4, Standard R5	Enables real-time improvement and stronger evidence of impact
Wage Progression & Employment	Standard R3, Standard R4	Connects preparation to workforce outcomes and candidate and completer success



Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation

CAEP accredits educator preparation providers and sets the standards that guide program quality and evidence. Its standards define what programs are expected to demonstrate about candidate knowledge and practice, clinical partnerships, candidate quality and progression, program impact, and continuous improvement.

Apprenticeship-aligned pathways are held to the same CAEP standards as any other route into teaching, and are expected to provide the same types of evidence.



Craft Education

Craft Education is a nonprofit workforce platform supporting registered apprenticeship and work-based learning. Craft helps employers, districts, and postsecondary institutions design, register, and track apprenticeship programs — including the on-the-job learning records and reporting needed for funding.

Craft has free platform options & extra support for those who need it. It also offers practical tools such as [Rapid Register](#) and [Funding Finder](#).

CO-BRANDING & PERMISSIONS

This playbook is co-published by [Craft Education](#) and the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation. References to CAEP Standards are provided to support alignment, evidence development, and program improvement; they do not constitute an accreditation decision, a review of any specific program, or a guarantee of any accreditation outcome.

Educator preparation programs may reproduce and adapt the tools, templates, and reflection pages in this playbook for internal planning, faculty development, and partnership use, with attribution. The CAEP and Craft Education names and marks may not be used to imply endorsement of a specific program without written permission.

SUGGESTED CITATION

Craft Education & Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation. (2026). *Building & Scaling Teacher Apprenticeships: A Playbook for Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs)* (Edition One).

EDITION	PUBLISHED	AUDIENCE
Edition One	2026	CAEP- accredited EPPs

Your next step

You do not need to have everything figured out before you start. If you worked through the Readiness Reflection and Lesson 7, you already have a focus area and a starting move. The next step is a conversation.

- 01 Share your focus area and starting move with one district or partner.
- 02 Bring the CAEP Alignment Crosswalk (page 131) to your next self-study or program review conversation.
- 03 If you want help identifying partners or reviewing your design, Craft can support that work and provide the platform to track clinical learning. Book time to learn more at craftededucation.com/schedule.

Apprenticeship is not a separate model layered on top of educator preparation. It is a more connected version of what strong programs already do.

Building & Scaling Teacher Apprenticeships — A Playbook for
Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs)