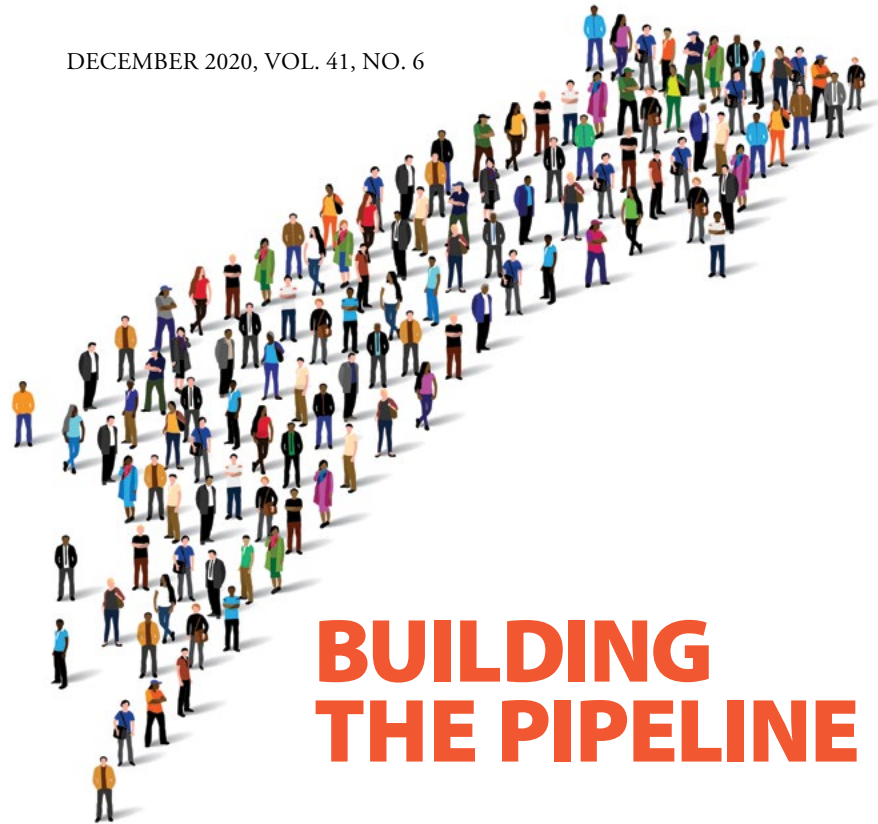


THE LEARNING PROFESSIONAL

SUPPLEMENTAL GUIDE FOR DISTRICT TEAMS

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BUILDING THE PIPELINE

Thank you for being a district member with Learning Forward. To help you spread the learning and engagement with your colleagues, we have designed this supplemental guide exclusively for district members.

This guide will help you take your teams through a deep dive into the latest issue of [The Learning Professional](#).

By reading the issue and using this guide, teams will:

- Consider how to recruit, support, and retain a more diverse educator workforce;
- Support the content knowledge and professional growth of paraprofessionals;
- Plan how to create or improve mentoring for new teachers; and

- Take a systems approach to the professional learning continuum from preservice through expert teaching.

You may wish to send this guide, or portions of it, to your team members to help everyone engage in the activities. Alternatively, you may wish to use it as a facilitation guide and walk your team through the activities yourself. We invite you to share the learning opportunities however they work best for you.

Be sure to give us feedback about whether you found this useful, and, if you post on social media, tag us [#LearnFwdTLP](#) [@LearningForward](#) so we can share your good work.

NEED HELP LOGGING IN?

If you or your colleagues have questions about logging in with your district membership to access the articles, call **800-727-7288** or email christy.colclasure@learningforward.org.

GET STARTED

Make mentoring meaningful

The first years of teaching are challenging, and attrition rates in those years are high. The article [“Mentors make a difference,”](#) by Tom Manning and Suzanne Bouffard, describes how the Louisiana Department of Education, with support from Learning Forward, built a mentoring program to combat those trends.

These questions are designed to help you discuss the role of mentoring in your district and identify goals to create or modify an approach that works in your context. You will want to schedule follow-up meetings to talk about how to address these goals and shape your mentoring initiatives.

ACTIONS:

1. Divide the group into partners using your preferred method (e.g. elbow partners). Give each partner time to discuss the following:
 - What was your first year of teaching like?
 - To whom did you turn for support? Were you assigned a mentor? Did you find someone to learn from in a more informal way?
 - Would you want other new teachers to have the same kind of experience you did? Why or why not?
2. Returning to the whole group, ask participants to think about a positive mentoring experience they've had — it doesn't have to be in school. Using a popcorn format, have participants share the characteristics of an effective mentor. Note emerging themes.
3. In the large group (or in smaller groups if you have many people), consider the following:

CURRENT MENTORING EFFORTS

- What kind of mentoring approach does your district take, if any?
- What are the strengths and limitations of this approach?
- Do you collect data about satisfaction with or outcomes of your mentoring approach? If so, what have you found so far?

ENVISIONING THE POSSIBILITIES

- What are the most urgent needs for new teachers in your district? How do you know? For example, are you seeing different student outcomes in classes with novice versus veteran teachers? Are your teacher attrition rates rising?
 - What kind of support would you most like new teachers in your district to have access to?
 - What resonated with you from the article that you could apply in your own context? For example, does your mentoring approach need more focus on instructional materials or state standards? Could your mentor teachers benefit from more hands-on exploration of content?
4. Make a plan to follow up on this conversation and pursue next steps on shaping or reshaping your mentoring approach. Who else should be involved? What other district initiatives should you coordinate with and what resources can you leverage to create synergy? How will you incorporate input from new and veteran teachers?



NEXT STEPS

Prioritize paraeducators' learning

Paraeducators are valuable, and often underused, assets in schools. Most have few opportunities for professional growth. Judy Storeygard and Karen Mutch-Jones write about a promising approach to change that in their article, [“Pathway for paraeducators.”](#) They describe a professional learning series that effectively built paraeducators' math knowledge and instructional strategies, with benefits for participants, head teachers, and students.

Ask your team to read the article and reflect on the roles of — and, more importantly, the potential of — paraeducators in your district.

ACTIONS:

1. Consider the current roles of and opportunities for paraeducators in your district.



What are the main responsibilities of paraeducators in your district?

What type of professional learning — and how much of it — does your district offer to paraeducators?

How much instructional content or district curriculum does the professional learning cover? If it doesn't cover any academic content, why not?

What opportunities do teachers and paraeducators have to engage with each other about academic content?

2. Consider how you can create or improve professional learning for paraeducators. How might you address these recommendations from the article's authors?

Element of effective professional learning

Strategies you will use to implement the element

Focus on instructional content.

Embed district goals and curriculum (including materials) in the professional learning.

Analyze student work.

Foster relationships among teachers and paraeducators.

Observe and coach paraeducators in the classroom.

Build an ongoing learning community.

Develop paraeducator mentors.

DEEP DIVE

Build a diverse workforce

There is a troubling gulf between the percentage of students and teachers of color. In the U.S., a little over half of students are nonwhite, but only about 20% of teachers are. Diverse faculties are beneficial not just for students of color but for all students, research shows.

In their [article](#), Lisa Lachlan-Haché and colleagues write about how the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders at the American Institutes for Research is helping districts develop thoughtful and systemic strategies for diversifying their teaching workforces. The center's Talent Development Framework focuses on diversity across three career stages: attract; prepare; develop, support, and retain.

ACTIONS:

Review the graphic of the Talent Development Framework. Consider how your district can engage in each of the three stages.



TALENT DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

STAGE 1: ATTRACT

What are you doing to recruit candidates of color?

Could you incorporate any ideas from the article? If so, which ones?

What other strategies can you use?

What action will you take tomorrow?

Next week?

Next month?

Follow-up plan for next meeting

TALENT DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK, continued

STAGE 2: PREPARE

What are you doing to lower inequitable barriers to the profession?

Could you incorporate any ideas from the article? If so, which ones? If not, why not?

What other strategies can you use?

What action will you take tomorrow?

Next week?

Next month?

Follow-up plan for next meeting

STAGE 3: DEVELOP, SUPPORT, AND RETAIN

How are you supporting the professional growth of teachers of color in your school or district?

Could you incorporate any ideas from the article? If so, which ones? If not, why not?

What other strategies can you use?

What action will you take tomorrow?

Next week?

Next month?

Follow-up plan for next meeting