



# FAQs Union Affiliates as Co-Sponsors

## What is the role of the Union in a Registered Apprenticeship Program?

In New York State, the local teachers' union should be part of the conversations around establishing a Registered Apprenticeship Program since components of the Program are subject to negotiations including how the experienced district-based educators (or Journey-workers in DOL language) will be compensated. The union should also be involved in discussions regarding how its members are selected to participate in the Program and what responsibilities are associated with being a Journey-level educator.

## How is this different from traditional student teaching?

A Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) is very different from traditional student teaching, which is a model created in the 1950s and now only requiring 70 days in the placement. The RAP model is built on a registered residency program, spanning one to two years, that results in a higher education degree and NYS Initial Teacher Certification. This model addresses the disconnect between studied theory and learned practice by placing residents (known as Apprentices) full-time alongside experienced educators to co-plan, co-teach, and fully participate in all aspects of teachers' instructional and non-instructional responsibilities in the school community during the one or two years. This type of immersive experience allows candidates to fully apply the degree coursework and academic theory in real time with real students under the guidance of and collaboration with an experienced classroom teacher, creating a new paradigm of learning.

## How are experienced teachers selected to serve as the school-based educators (or Journey-workers) for the Apprentices?

The selection of experienced teachers as the district based educator will be determined (typically through an MOU) between the Institution of Higher Education and the district. Since the union will be negotiating how this additional work will be compensated, selection should also be part of the discussion and agreement.

## What are the responsibilities of the members selected as the district-based educators?

This may also be determined by Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the IHE and the district in collaboration with the union. Like above, this aspect of the conversation should be part of the negotiations when determining the manner and level of compensation for the work. As examples, some responsibilities may include: completing a formal observation with written feedback or IHE determined evaluation of the candidate and meeting with the IHE based educator (previously known as the field supervisor). Typically other responsibilities may depend on the program, and could involve participating in the interview and matching process, any program specific workshops, as well as other responsibilities as set out by the RAP and negotiated with the union.

## How is the recognition of the work negotiated?

It is recommended the local teachers' union and the district negotiate a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) setting forth their understandings related to the roles, responsibilities, and compensation for the work to be performed by Journey-level educators. The parties should consider incorporating the terms of this MOA into the collective bargaining agreement during the next round of contract negotiations.

## Are Apprentices members of the local affiliate?

Apprentices (as resident teacher candidates enrolled in an approved teacher residency educator preparation program) hold a Residency Certificate granted by the New York State Education Department. If a recognition clause in the teacher collective bargaining agreement specifies that the union represents all certificated personnel then it is at the local's discretion whether it wishes to recognize (residents and Apprentices) all holding the Residency Certificate, as local union members. Apprentices and residents would pay local dues as determined by the local teacher union as well as NYSUT/AFT/NEA dues with the stipend amount determining the appropriate membership category. If the teacher collective bargaining agreement does not address certificated personnel, a local interested in possibly adding the resident title (for residents and/or Apprentices) to the bargaining unit should contact their Labor Relations Specialist as to the process. In all circumstances, the resident and/or Apprentice can be recognized as a student member.

## What are the benefits?

The Apprentice must complete a minimum of 1200 hours in paid on-the-job training under the 1:1 guidance of an experienced district-based educator. This level of collaboration, deep learning and application of college coursework in the field, under the guidance of an experienced teacher, has been shown to greatly increase retention of early career teachers. It is the members of the teachers' union who on board and support the newest members of the school community, so this retention is valuable. RAPs also allow the union to negotiate ways to recognize this important work as experienced educators provide guidance, opportunities, co-planning and co-teaching with the Apprentices. Unions and their members are critical to the success of new educators and can embrace this work as union legacy work - by teachers, for teachers.

Benefits to consider:

- addresses critical workforce challenges including recruitment and retention
- reduces student:teacher ratio, allowing for higher levels of intervention or individual/small group instruction
- creates a collaborative work and learning environment
- delivers student, classroom and district ready first year teachers to fill vacancies
- instructional continuity during experienced teacher absence
- recognizes with compensation, the work of guiding and supporting teacher candidates as Apprentices
- a legacy initiative with long lasting positive impact
- supported nationally by both the AFT and NEA

**Where can we find out more about participating in a RAP?** The **NYS Educator Workforce Development HUB** provides technical assistance and resources to help districts, BOCES, local union affiliates, and IHEs register Apprenticeship programs. Reach out directly to HUB team member Rita Floess at [rita@teachmeducation.org](mailto:rita@teachmeducation.org)

