DESE MA RTAP Informational Webinar 10.18.24

0:04
Hello, everyone.

0:05
Good morning and welcome to our first webinar in a series of upcoming informational presentations on Massachusetts new Registered Teacher Apprenticeship program.

0:15
My name is Claire Abbott and I'm the Director of the Office of Educator Effectiveness.

0:19
I'm joined today by my colleague Lakia Bayman, Dessie's Program Coordinator for the Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program or what we call our TAP.

0:29
And I want to give a shout out as well to our colleague Darcy Fernandez, Senior Associate Commissioner at Dessie, who is leading this work on partner in partnership with our office and is in attendance as well.

0:41
In today's webinar, we will introduce you to our TAP and the unique opportunity it brings to aspiring teachers, hiring districts and educator preparation programs in Massachusetts.

0:53
Future webinars in the series will dig deeper into additional topics such as the role of the educator, preparation provider, the program application and review process, opportunities for grant funding through DESSIE, and sustainable funding models.

1:09
Today we will focus on the program itself and its key features so you can get a sense if this is a good opportunity for you at this time or in the future.

1:21
A few norms for today.

1:23
We are conducting today's webinar in a webinar format in order to facilitate its recording and to ensure that we capture and record all questions.

1:32
This webinar will be available on our website for additional viewing along with the slides.

1:37
Please submit any questions using the Q&A feature on Zoom, which is located at the bottom of your screen.

1:43
We will monitor this throughout and use what remaining time we have to answer them live.

1:49
For questions that we cannot get to, we will collect them and provide answers through an updated FAQ document which will be posted on our website.

1:58
We strongly encourage you to share your questions in the Q&A so we know what additional information you may need going forward.

2:04
And as always, please direct any future questions to the Educator Apprenticeships mailbox.

2:14
Here's our agenda for today.

2:16
After a quick overview of the background and context for R Taps in Massachusetts, we will discuss the three main goals of this program, the requirements and considerations for implementation, and then share a brief introduction to the application and review process for R TAPS.

2:36
First, some background and context.

2:40
Before we dive into the program itself, it's important to acknowledge the partners that came together around its design and approval.

2:48
I want to specifically thank the National Center for Grow Your Own, which served as a key advisor to our team in the development of the state standards for our TAP and ensuring alignment to national standards that have informed similar programs throughout the country.

3:03
And we are incredibly grateful to our colleagues at the Division of Apprentice Standards in the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, without whom this program would not be possible.

3:14
They have been thoughtful, creative partners in bringing the registered teacher apprentice world to Massachusetts, and we look forward to a long partnership together.

3:26
I also want to thank members of a key external advisory group who met consistently for six months last year to help design and draft the requirements for Massachusetts First Registered Teacher

Apprenticeship Program with representatives from our two major teachers unions, administrators, and Ed prep leadership.

3:45
This group was essential in crafting a program that met the needs of Massachusetts students and educators with the goal of removing inequitable barriers to teaching, expanding access to the profession, and cultivating a truly diverse and effective workforce.

4:01
We are grateful for their partnership.

4:07
All of this work is in service of our educational vision and it's third of three strategic priorities to develop and sustain a workforce that is diverse, culturally responsive, well prepared and committed to continuous improvement such that all students have equitable access to effective educators.

4:27
The Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program, with its commitment to recruiting, developing and retaining a diverse workforce, alongside its explicit investment in doing so, and culturally and linguistically sustaining teaching and learning environments, truly embodies the vision of the strategic objective and will hopefully serve as a model going forward for a new and sustainable pathway into teaching.

4:56
The good news is that Massachusetts is not alone in rolling out this new pathway to teacher licensure.

5:01
As you can see here, we are joining over 35 states that have recently developed the occupation of Registered Teacher Apprentice, with the number of enrolled apprentices ranging from fewer than 50 in some of the newer states to over 100 in the more experienced states.

5:17
We have the opportunity to learn from and alongside them as we invest in this new pathway.

5:23
We are so new that we haven't even shaded our state blue on this map yet.

5:30
So what is a Registered Teacher Apprenticeship program?

5:33
In a nutshell, it is a clear, articulated pathway for an aspiring educator to become a teacher at little to no cost and get paid to do so.

5:43
There's a lot that goes into that simple statement.

5:45

However, first and foremost, Apprentice is still complete and approved preparation program in the licensure area they are seeking.

5:54
During this time they work in a full time instructional role under the guidance of a mentor teacher in AK12 classroom.

6:02
This hands on job embedded learning experience is an essential component to our TAPS.

6:08
And finally, through its unique design and explicit goals, our Taps in Massachusetts are set up to improve the diversity, effectiveness and ultimate ultimately the retention of teachers in local communities, particularly in our right, our most diverse and hardest to staff localities.

6:26
Our TAP takes all the best of grow your own residency and traditional preparation models and integrates them into one comprehensive pathway into teaching.

6:40
I'm now going to turn it over to my colleague, Lakia Bayman to walk us through the program goals for our Taps in Massachusetts.

6:48
Thanks, Claire.

6:49
So the RTAP program is built around 3 main goals, increasing educator diversity, strengthening the educator pipeline and boosting educator quality.

7:00
Our focus is on making the teaching workforce more reflective of the communities we serve.

7:05
Open it up more pathways into teaching by breaking down barriers and making sure every educator gets the best training under the best mentorship.

7:15
These goals work together to build a more inclusive and skilled teaching workforce that benefits students across Massachusetts.

7:22
We'll walk through each goal to show how RTAT plays a role in achieving them.

7:31
So why do we need to diversify?

7:37
This map highlights racial and ethnic diversity across the US, showing that many regions are becoming more diverse.

7:44
However, the teaching workforce hasn't fully caught up in states like California, Texas, and New York, where diversity is especially high.

7:52
It's important for the teaching profession to reflect that a more diverse, educated workforce is important for providing culturally responsive education and creating an inclusive environment where all students feel seen, valued, and supported.

8:10
This particular map shows that almost every community in Massachusetts has become more racially and ethnically diverse between 2010 and 2020, with only one town seeing an increase in its white population.

8:24
As our population changes, it's important for the teaching workforce to reflect the diversity.

8:30
When teachers come from a variety of backgrounds, it helps create more inclusive classrooms where students see themselves represented and benefit from culturally responsive teaching.

8:40
By diversifying the teaching profession, we can better serve Massachusetts.

8:44
Growing diverse student population This graphic highlights the growing gap between the diversity of students and teachers in Massachusetts.

8:56
Right now, students of color make up almost 46% of the public school population, but only 10% of teachers come from diverse backgrounds.

9:06
By 20-30, it's expected that over half of the students will be students of color, but without targeted efforts, only 14% of teachers will be.

9:16
This gap shows the pressing need to diversify the teaching workforce so all students can learn from educators who reflect their own experiences and backgrounds.

9:31
The research on all the benefits of a more diverse and culturally responsive teaching workforce.

9:35
It shows that it's all about increasing opportunities for all students.

9:41
Research shows that having teachers from different backgrounds exposes students to diverse perspective and helps them think more critically and learn about other cultures.

9:50
Students of color in particular, do better in school when they have teachers who share their racial or ethnic background.

9:57
Diverse teachers also create a stronger sense of community and belonging in schools, which help students succeed.

10:04
Overall, having teachers from different backgrounds help students become more open minded and ready for the world now.

10:14
How will RTAP help to diversify the teacher workforce?

10:18
RTAP will help to close the gap between student and teacher demographics through local community investment and a focus on equitable hiring and recruitment.

10:28
It will also encourage teaching practices that honor different cultures and languages, creating classrooms where every student feels seen and understood.

10:37
At the same time, it would build supportive learning communities where teachers can thrive.

10:46
Next, we'll explore how RTEP creates clear pathways to help more people become teachers, ensuring a more diverse and well prepared workforce.

10:58
To address the pipeline issues and work to expand access, we need to understand where the leaks are regarding racial diversity.

11:06
The biggest leaks in the pipeline come early.

11:09
Massachusetts loses much of its potential teacher diversity early in the pipeline between high school and college graduation.

11:17
Once certified, teachers of color have similar hiring and retention rates.

11:23
This means we need to diversify the pool of students interested in becoming teachers as early as high school and then supporting a diverse pipeline through college.

11:33
Creating initiatives to support diverse students and enrolling, persisting through and successfully graduating from college on the path to teaching is key.

11:46
According to Massachusetts teachers, the biggest hurdles to becoming a teacher include passing the M tells, finding time for training, managing the high cost of education, and navigating the complex licensure process.

11:59
Interventions such as financial assistance, tutoring, exam preparation, and other evidence based strategies can help close diversity gaps early in the pipeline and support diverse candidates in accessing and completing higher education as well as passing licensure exams.

12:17
Helping people to become or overcome these challenges is important to attracting and retaining a more diverse and well qualified teaching workforce.

12:26
Our tabs are uniquely positioned to address each of these challenges systematically from the outset.

12:37
We can't create more expansive pipelines into the into the profession without simultaneously working to improve the environment we're bringing teachers into.

12:45
Data shows that teachers of color consistently leave the profession at higher rates than their white counterparts.

12:52
Nationally, around 19% of teachers of color leave or move schools each year, compared to 15% of white teachers in Massachusetts.

13:01
There has also been a small but steady decline in teacher retention over the last three years, with the attrition gap between white teachers and non white teachers actually widening from 5 to 7%.

13:14
This gap is often due to factors like racial isolation, lack of support and mentorship, higher expectations to manage students of color, and feelings of being undervalued.

13:26
Addressing these challenges is important for both recruiting and retaining a diverse teaching workforce and underscores the importance of creating more inclusive pipelines into culturally responsive and linguistically sustained in school environments.

13:44
The good news is that we really do know what schools and districts can do to recruit and retain teachers of color.

13:51
Our tabs are designed in accordance with these actions.

13:54
These include offering financial support, collecting data on hiring and retention by race to track progress, and developing diverse leadership committed to positive working conditions.

14:06
It's also important to create inclusive environments that respect all racial and ethnic backgrounds.

14:12
These efforts help ensure teachers of color feel well valued and supported, reducing turnover.

14:22
The second pipeline focus of our TAPS in Massachusetts must address persistent role specific shortages.

14:29
In Massachusetts, we know that teacher shortages are especially severe in certain roles in regions.

14:36
The largest and most persistent vacancies are in special education, ESOL, early childhood, and secondary STEM rolls.

14:45
Regionally, central and Western Massachusetts struggle the most to fill vacancies with job openings, and in these areas, persisting well into the school year.

14:54
Solving these shortages is key to making sure all students get the support they need, and it's a focus of our Taps in Massachusetts.

15:05
Our tabs will help and strengthen the teacher pipeline by providing multiple ways to enter the field, including paraprofessional and college pathways.

15:14

It also offers full time employment and wrap around support throughout to ensure that participants have the resources they need to succeed in the classroom.

15:23
Our tabs will also focus on high need hard to staff areas like special education, ESOL, STEM, and early childhood education.

15:35
Next, we'll discuss how to build and retain an effective teaching workforce to ensure student success.

15:45
This quote from Ingersoll Merrill in May clearly shows how important good teacher preparation is.

15:51
It explains that teachers with less training are much more likely to quit, which highlights the need for strong programs to help teachers succeed and stay in their jobs longer.

16:05
We know from decades of research that an effective educator needs strong knowledge of their subject skills to teach it well and the ability to connect with diverse students.

16:15
High quality training, mentorship, and real classroom experience are also key to developing these strengths.

16:22
Together, these elements help teachers succeed and support student learning.

16:31
Our TAP strengthens educator quality by requiring districts to partner with approved educator preparation providers focused on equity driven training and support through job embedded learning and teaching, our TAPS will ensure that educators meet rigorous standards for effective teaching practice and subject matter knowledge.

16:53
In order to achieve initial licensure, they have to ensure that they meet all of these expectations.

16:59
This helps them excel in the classroom, better serve all students, and support their school communities for years to come.

17:09
I'm now going to turn it back over to my colleague who will walk us through the program features for our TAPS in Massachusetts.

17:18
Thank you, Lakia.

17:19
Before jumping into the program features of our TAPS in Massachusetts, it's important to understand the key players involved in getting any RTAP established and registered with the state's Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development.

17:33
In Massachusetts, the state's Division of Apprentice Standards, located within the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, is the authorizing body for all apprentice occupations, including teacher apprentices.

17:46
As the licensing body for teachers, Dessie serves as the intermediary to the Division of Apprentice Standards, meaning that Dessie is responsible for reviewing and approving all R tabs to ensure alignment to teacher preparation and licensure requirements before submitting those programs to DAS for authorization.

18:07
The districts serve as the employer and therefore the Co sponsor for all registered teacher apprentices.

18:13
Each RTAP district must have designated Educator Preparation Program Partner or EPP to serve as the related technical instruction provider as well as support from the local union or related labor body.

18:28
Together, this partnership ensures adherence to the preparation and licensure requirements in Massachusetts, as well as the employment requirements associated with registered apprentices.

18:43
Key program elements of all R taps in Massachusetts include the following.

18:48
First, this is a state and nationally recognized credential to teach authorized through the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development and aligned to all state and federal requirements in Massachusetts.

19:03
Our taps must be explicitly designed to prioritize the recruitment of diverse candidates and expand pipelines into our hardest to staff roles, which right now includes special education, ESL, early childhood, and secondary STEM positions.

19:20
Every registered teacher apprentice must complete no less than 2000 hours of on the job training as well as at least 150 hours annually of related technical instruction, which broadly equates to 9:00 to 10:00 credit hours or three to four courses per year.

19:37
And all apprentices must be employed full time in an instructional role with a progressive wage schedule in place.

19:46
Our TAPS must also be designed to support cohorts of apprentices in order to ensure the provision of comprehensive systemic support to participants.

19:58
We're going to 0 in on the last three program elements more deeply right now, multiple pathways culturally and linguistically sustaining teaching and learning environments and mentor training and support.

20:10
The RTAP standards in Massachusetts have been designed to accommodate multiple pathways to licensure including baccalaureate, post baccalaureate degree and non degree granting routes.

20:25
This makes it ideal for paraprofessionals, recent graduates, career changers, or anyone seeking a low cost pathway to becoming a teacher.

20:35
We'll talk more about how to think strategically about the pathway that makes the most sense for you later in the webinar.

20:44
Another essential feature of Massachusetts R Taps is the explicit requirement that programs be situated in teaching and learning communities that are culturally and linguistically sustaining.

20:56
This means that classrooms and schools in which apprentices are prepared are working to ensure that all students have a sense of belonging, engage in deeper learning, and are held to high expectations with targeted support as articulated through our state's educational vision.

21:13
It means that apprentices are provided with strong models of culturally and linguistically sustaining instruction and pedagogy from both mentor teachers and Ed prep faculty, with opportunities for meaningful practice and feedback to help them develop their practice.

21:29
Which brings us to the last key feature of our Taps in Massachusetts that we want to emphasize today.

21:36
We know how important it is to have a strong mentor or supervising practitioner, in this case, in the development of an aspiring teacher.

21:45
They not only serve as models of effective practice, but they themselves benefit from the service and support provided to teacher candidates in our TAP districts.

21:55

Mentor teachers will receive high quality training and professional development in culturally and linguistically sustaining practices and supervision, monetary stipends to compensate them for their expertise and their time, and sufficient flexibility in their schedule to provide the support to apprentices that is necessary to ensure their growth and development.

22:16
Dusty will be investing in mentor training programs for this explicit purpose and our TAP districts will be expected to integrate sufficient funding for mentor training and compensation into their program design.

22:33
Given these considerations and expectations, RTAP is not the right fit for every district, but may be ideal for those who need it most.

22:42
Those districts and EPP partners that are committed to NC.

22:46
The urgency around fostering a more diverse teacher workforce while strengthening local pipelines into hard to staff roles.

22:58
So we've just discussed key program features.

23:01
I'm now going to shift gears to what is required in order to operate a Registered Teacher Apprenticeship program in Massachusetts.

23:09
These program requirements are clearly outlined in the Work Process Schedule and Related Instruction Outline, which is located on the RTAP web page and should serve as the basic outline for any RTAP program design.

23:22
Right now we will walk through requirements for districts, Epps, apprentices, and mentor teachers.

23:31
Here you see a list of requirements for employing distance, many of which should now be familiar, along with a set of considerations relative to these requirements.

23:41
Any district looking to start in RTAP should consider a few things.

23:46
With a focus increasing the diversity of their teaching staff, districts will need to identify the highest need roles in their local communities like special education or STEM.

23:57

They will need to invest in the provision and compensation of a strong, well trained mentor workforce and identify full time jobs in instructional roles for apprentices while they learn.

24:09
Districts will also need to partner with an approved educator preparation program in order to ensure 150 hours of related technical instruction each year alongside at least 2000 hours of on the job training for every apprentice.

24:24
Additionally, districts will need to demonstrate the use of high quality instructional materials.

24:29
Work with local unions for support and utilize a cohort model to help apprentices learn and grow together.

24:41
Educator preparation providers considering our TAPS also need to focus on a few key things.

24:47
First, they must have state approval for their licensure pathway.

24:52
Programs with probationary approval are not eligible.

24:56
Their coursework should prepare apprentices for diverse classrooms by promoting culturally and linguistically sustaining teach teaching practices.

25:05
Epps should also provide a clear course of study that's not only aligned to the relevant subject matter and pedagogical requirements, but that also equips apprentices to advocate for equity and justice in their communities.

25:19
On the job training should be practical and fit real world teaching needs.

25:24
And lastly, offering flexible learning options is important to make the program more convenient and accessible for working apprentices.

25:37
Apprentices themselves must also meet certain requirements to participate.

25:42
They must be at least 18 years of age and have a high school diploma or equivalent.

25:47

They must meet physical requirements set by the employer to navigate the school environment, and additionally, they must fulfill the admission requirements of the educator preparation provider.

25:58
A critical feature of registered teacher apprentices is also the fact that during the apprenticeship term, apprentices work in classrooms under the supervision of a licensed mentor teacher called a journey worker, and they are not allowed to serve as the lead teacher or teacher of record at any point.

26:16
The goal is to assist and learn directly alongside their mentor through the duration of the apprenticeship term.

26:27
Wages for apprentices will be based on the employer's wage schedule.

26:31
The wage must be at least $15 per hour following minimum wage requirements, the employer's prevailing wage rate and any collective bargaining agreements.

26:42
After completing the program and obtaining their teaching license, apprentices will be paid according to the district's existing salary scale for certified teachers.

26:55
Every apprentice must also be assigned to and supervised by a journey worker or mentor teacher.

27:03
Supervising journey workers or mentors must be full time employees of the school district and have at least three years of experience in a teaching role aligned with the Apprentices licensure pathway.

27:15
Additionally, mentors must have received a Proficient or exemplary rating on their most recent performance evaluation.

27:23
Together with their partner EPP.

27:25
Employers should select Journey Worker mentor teachers who have demonstrated a strong impact on student outcomes, particularly with marginalized groups, as well as culturally responsive and linguistically sustaining teaching practices.

27:40
Mentors also need to be capable of coaching a diverse group of adult learners.

27:49
So how long does it take to complete an apprenticeship term?

27:53
Completing an RTAP requires at least 2000 hours of on the job training and 150 hours of related instruction each year, which typically equates to three to four college courses per year.

28:06
This is representative of a of a post back program or similar, and given the length of the school year, a program of this duration would likely span 2 academic years.

28:18
For context, longer RTAP pathways that cover a full baccalaureate degree granting track will typically take around 6000 hours of on the job training.

28:30
After finishing an RTAP, apprentices may be endorsed for their initial teaching license, making them eligible for a full time teaching position in Massachusetts.

28:45
We've just discussed program requirements.

28:47
I'm now going to turn it back over to Lakia, who will present an overview of the program review and approval process for all our TAPS and information about DESSIE grant funds to support a small cohort of our TAP districts.

29:01
Thank you again, Claire.

29:03
As noted earlier, Dessie serves as the intermediary for registered teacher apprentices and will begin accepting and reviewing applications from interested districts later this fall.

29:15
Districts who are interested may start the process by completing an Intent to submit and Needs Assessment survey.

29:22
This survey should highlight the district's high deed teaching positions and target licensure role, identify prospective EPP partner, demonstrate local interests, and articulate workforce diversity needs.

29:35
If approved, the district will be notified and can proceed with submitting a full application.

29:41
The submission window for new R tax is from November 2024 to March 2025.

29:51

The RTAP review and approval process follows a structured timeline, with the submission window again running from November 2024 to March 2025.

30:00
In November, districts and programs intended to create new Rtaps will submit their intent and conduct these assessments to determine program requirements and workforce demands.

30:11
After the needs assessment, the four RTAC proposals, including program design objectives and implementation strategies, must be submitted between December 24 and January 25.

30:24
Dessie will then review the submissions between January and February to ensure that all programs meet state standards, apprenticeship requirements and workforce goals.

30:35
In March, districts and programs will be notified of their approval status, including any necessary revisions or next steps.

30:43
Finally, once DESSIE approval is granted, all R taps will be submitted to the DAS Division of Apprentice Standards for official registration.

30:57
Districts can eventually submit multiple R taps across different licensure areas and with various Epps.

31:03
However, to keep things manageable, it's best for districts to start by focusing on just one pathway licensure area and EPP partner in their first year.

31:14
Informational webinars are available to help guide districts through the application and review process, with the first one scheduled for November 8th at 11:00 AM Eastern Time.

31:28
Our tab has built in supports to help districts and Epps succeed.

31:33
This includes handbooks, PLCS for managing implementation and change, training programs for supervisors and mentors, guidance on securing state and federal funding, and external evaluations to assess the program's impact.

31:47
These resources are designed to ensure the successful and sustainable implementation of RTAC across participating districts.

31:58

DESSIE will offer grant funding in individual awards ranging from 100,000 to 250,000 per year for up to three years, depending on available funding.

32:09
The application window for grant funded R Taps will be open again from November through February 2025, with informational webinars starting in November.

32:19
Key features of the grant Fund R Taps include DESI provided required mentor training and provision of apprentice affinity groups.

32:27
Grant funded R Taps must demonstrate evidence of culturally and linguistically sustained teaching and learning environments, the use of high quality instructional materials, a focus on high needs areas like special education in STEM, and the ability to provide wrap around support to ensure program success.

32:48
The RTAP grant timeline is similar to the general timeline.

32:53
It's slightly truncated so that there are certain requirements that are expected when the grant application window opens.

33:01
Districts can attend informational webinars and office hours to get support with the application process.

33:08
In the spring, selected districts will be notified as part of Cohort one, with the next steps including DAS registration and apprentice recruitment.

33:17
Finally, in the summer and fall, the program officially launches.

33:22
This includes mentor training, completion of summer coursework, and the start of employment and apprenticeships in the fall.

33:30
The grant will prioritize districts with larger than average gaps between student and teacher demographics, as well as Title One schools and districts and those designated as underperforming.

33:44
On behalf of DESI and the RTAP team, we thank you for your engagement and participation in today's webinar.

33:51
We hope you found the information helpful and if you'd like to follow up with us with any questions,

you can be added to our mailing list and you could also follow up with us at educatorapprenticeships@mass.gov.

34:03
You can also visit the DESI RTAP website for more details and resources or to sign up to meet with one of us during our our upcoming office hours.

34:13
We will provide the link in the chat.

34:16
We look forward to staying connected and supporting your efforts to build a diverse and effective teaching workforce.

34:21
Thank you again.