

# LEVERAGING STUDENT TEACHERS TO SUPPORT FLEXIBLE STAFFING MODELS



In anticipation of remote or blended teaching models continuing throughout 2020-2021, districts have an opportunity to embrace flexibly-designed staffing structures that leverage specific teachers' skills and competencies while mitigating circumstances that may limit personnel availability, such as extended leaves of absence, health considerations, or reduced class sizes.

DESE is continuing to explore additional flexibilities to support flexible staffing models. We encourage districts to work with local union partners and educator preparation partners to explore how these and other flexible staffing models could benefit students, student teachers, and educators in your community. The suggestions proposed in this guide:

- **Take advantage of the removal of physical classrooms** and school boundaries that previously limited strategic student and educator assignment to:
  - Leverage exemplary/mentor teachers who remain remote but oversee and facilitate collaboration and instruction for one or more student teachers
  - Target student need with teacher skill
- **Consider co-teaching approaches**, which hold promise and opportunity in supporting blended or remote models and meeting the needs of students with disabilities and English learners
- **Staff differentiated roles working in teams:** Consider all of the tasks individual teachers and/or student teachers are currently doing and have them specialize for a cohort of students

## IN THIS GUIDE

The flexible staffing models presented on the following pages are informed by research, and could be used alone or in combination to better support students and educators this year and beyond, while maintaining the educator pipeline in your district. **Your district may want to consider “piloting” staffing models during the 2020-2021 school year that not only solve short-term challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic, but also may lead to long term solutions to the inequities and inflexibilities that persist in traditional staffing/scheduling models.**

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# WHY STUDENT TEACHERS?

## DID YOU KNOW?

Each year, MA-approved preparation providers prepare 6,500 educators, of whom 4,200 (approximately 65%) are employed in MA public schools, teaching roughly 65,000 students in year one alone! The COVID-19 pandemic threatens to disrupt that pipeline, and it is more essential than ever that districts and approved preparation partners work together to ensure teacher candidates continue to receive the experiences they need to be effective educators from day one in their classrooms.

## YOUR PIPELINE OF EDUCATORS IS ESSENTIAL

As your district navigates many difficult decisions this year, we know you are also considering the long-term ramifications of those decisions on the future of your workforce and the teaching profession. DESE is encouraging schools and districts to see **teacher preparation candidates as essential to instructional models this year**. Not only will this be critical to preventing teacher shortages in the future, teacher candidates can also be a key component of supporting your teachers and students this year and next, as the models in this resource demonstrate. Consider:

- Evidence suggests classroom achievement and student engagement increase when a student teacher is present.
- Not only is a student teacher more likely to teach in your district after completing their program, they are also likely to be more effective than the average first year teacher if employed by the district where they completing student teaching.
- Student teachers are likely to stay in your school/district longer than other new hires.

## RACIAL EQUITY IN PRACTICE

The teacher preparation pipeline in MA is more diverse than its current workforce (14% compared to 8% identify as individuals of color) and, in some preparation programs, 25-40% or more identify as candidates of color.

Educators of color make a difference for all students. Prioritizing student teachers during this time can strengthen the key entry point into the workforce for people of color and improve the experience of students who may otherwise lack a relationship with an educator of color.

## PREPARATION PROVIDERS HAVE ADDITIONAL FLEXIBILITIES THIS YEAR

Approved preparation providers in the state are eager to partner and think creatively about a supportive experience for supervisors, candidates, and students. They can now more flexibly:

- ✓ Take on more of the evaluation, observation, and documentation requirements to reduce lift on the classroom teacher who is supporting a student teacher
- ✓ Assign Supervising Practitioners to student teachers who may not be licensed in the exact same field
- ✓ Conduct observations remotely, so additional preparation faculty or supervisors do not have to be in the building

*In order to implement some of the models suggested, Teacher Candidates will need to be eligible for in-person learning. Districts should ensure their volunteer policies exempt Teacher Candidates in order to ensure they can be available for in-person learning when needed and as appropriate.*

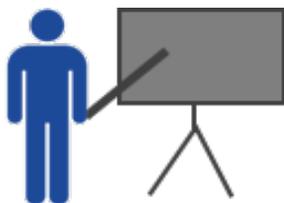
# CO-TEACHING MODELS

Co-teaching models allow additional flexibility for hybrid and remote learning. These models have also shown particular success for English learners and students with disabilities. These models can take a variety of forms based on the needs of the students and educators involved.

## REMOTE SUPERVISING PRACTITIONERS

These models allow flexibility in the location and role of the Supervising Practitioner and teacher candidate. These can be enhanced by providing teacher candidates with one or more of the co-teaching models and/or differentiated roles described in this resource.

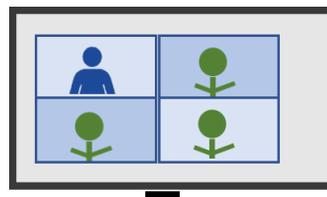
### WITH IN-PERSON TEACHER CANDIDATES



*"We have been told that some teachers might not feel safe to come into the schools - so our teacher candidate will go in and the Supervisor Practitioner will zoom in."*  
Educator Preparation Program Representative

Some experienced, effective Supervising Practitioners may be unable to teach in-person classes due to health concerns. In these instances, Teacher Candidates, under close supervision from their Supervising Practitioner and Program Supervisor, can lead in-person instruction. The Supervising Practitioner can provide full group and/or small group instruction remotely, and provide support, coaching, and co-planning to the Teacher Candidate.

### WITH REMOTE TEACHER CANDIDATES



*"If the district is engaged in remote learning, the [teacher] candidate participates in full role experiences with their Supervising Practitioner. The Program Supervisor conducts virtual visits for triangulated feedback. We have been working with them to ensure our candidates get school district email accounts so they can be included in all PD and teaching activities. This has gone well so far."*  
Educator Preparation Program Representative

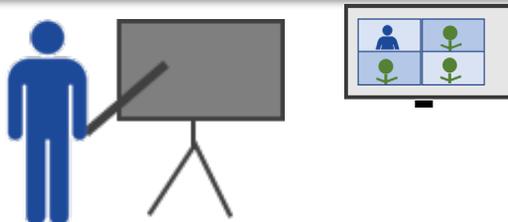
When Supervising Practitioners are expected to teach students remotely, remote teacher candidates can fulfill their student teaching experience and work in the same capacity as their Supervising Practitioner. They can gradually build up to assuming the full responsibility of the Supervising Practitioner's role, and provide full group, small group, and targeted instruction to students while collaborating with the Supervising Practitioner to plan and deliver remote instruction.

# CO-TEACHING MODELS

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## REMOTE TEACHER CANDIDATES

With in-person Supervising Practitioners



*"This model will enable Teacher Candidates unable to attend in-person placements due to geographical challenges or personal safety concerns to complete their [student teaching]. We are encouraging routine planning and meeting times, and close communication to ensure that TCs have the opportunity to become part of the classroom community, design and deliver instruction, and work with students."*

Educator Preparation Program Representative

Similar to the model with remote Supervising Practitioners and remote teacher candidates, remote teacher candidates can provide full group lessons, small group support, and targeted intervention/acceleration for students to supplement in-person instruction provided by the Supervising Practitioner, while benefitting from the opportunity to observe the instruction and receive coaching and support provided by the Supervising Practitioner. This role is particularly supportive in hybrid models where the Supervising Practitioner assumes responsibility for in-person instruction.

## PAIRING ACROSS CONTENT AREAS



Particularly for Teacher Candidates seeking licensure in a specialty area (ie. Visual Arts, Music, Physical Education, etc.), pairing a teacher candidate with a core content Supervising Practitioner within their grade span may allow the candidate to complete their field based experiences while allowing the Supervising Practitioner and their students to benefit from co-planning, co-developing, and co-teaching an integrated curriculum, with the relevant specialty content woven into core classroom content. This may particularly benefit students in districts that have cut back on traditional content areas. In order to be done effectively, close collaboration with a specialty content area expert, either as a second Supervising Practitioner or as a Program Supervisor, will be essential to ensuring the teacher candidate is developing both subject matter knowledge and pedagogical skills.

# SAMPLE SCHEDULE

	STUDENT	SUPERVISING PRACTITIONER	TEACHER CANDIDATE(S)
Period 1	Morning Meeting	Family Outreach	Lead Morning Meeting
	ELA: Lesson, Small Group, Independent Work Time	Teach Full Group Lesson	Observe Full Group Lesson
		Small Group	Small Group
		Small Group	Small Group
Period 2	Science/Social Studies*	Teach Science*	Prep*
		Prep*	Teach Science*
Period 3	Special	Collaborative Planning Time	Collaborative Planning Time
Period 4	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
Period 5	Targeted Intervention/Acceleration*	Targeted I/A Group A	Targeted I/A Group B
	Enrichment*	Targeted I/A Group C	Targeted I/A Group D
Period 6	Math: Full Group Lesson, Independent Work Time, Small Group Support	Observe Full Group Lesson	Teach Full Group Lesson
		Small Group	Small Group
		Coaching/Feedback*	Coaching/Feedback*
Period 7	Special*	Prep*	Office Hours*
	Independent Work Time/Office Hours*		

*\*alternates daily*

*\*alternates daily*

## KEY SCHEDULE COMPONENTS

### FOR STUDENTS

- Small group learning in most subject areas
- Opportunities for individualized support in I/A and office hours
- Build relationships with multiple adults
- Specials and enrichment provide opportunities to learn new skills

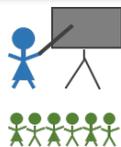
### FOR EDUCATORS

- Collaborative Planning Time to co-plan lessons and units, plan targeted supports
- Dedicated coaching/feedback sessions, with opportunities to observe and give/receive feedback
- Divide lead responsibility by subject area (can rotate quarterly)

# DIFFERENTIATED ROLES

## SMALL GROUP INSTRUCTOR

These models allow flexibility in the location and role of the Supervising Practitioner and teacher candidate. These can be enhanced by providing teacher candidates with one or more of the co-teaching models and/or differentiated roles described below.



## STUDENT ENGAGEMENT COACH

Student teachers are assigned a group of students for whom they are responsible for socio-emotional support and wellness checks, family communication, or technology/access checks.



## TUTOR

Student teachers hold open office hours and scheduled tutoring sessions to provide 1:1 or small group academic support for students.



## DIFFERENTIATION LEAD

Student teachers collaborate with Supervising Practitioner to co-plan and implement differentiated supports designed to meet the needs for all students.



## CLASSROOM COMMUNITY FACILITATOR

Student teachers organize small and/or whole group community building activities.



## DATA MONITOR

Student teachers compile and analyze student data from across learning management systems and/or digital platforms.



## ASYNCHRONOUS VIRTUAL SUPPORT

Student teachers collaborate with Supervising Practitioner to co-plan and record asynchronous learning sessions and activities for students.



## SYNCHRONOUS VIRTUAL SUPPORT

Student teachers compile and analyze student data from across learning management systems and/or digital platforms.



## MULTIPLE TEACHER CANDIDATES WITH ONE SUPERVISING PRACTITIONER

In some instances, with experienced and effective Supervising Practitioners, multiple teacher candidates may work together with one Supervising Practitioner. This model allows multiple teacher candidates to benefit from the Supervising Practitioner's expertise, and provides students with more flexible opportunities for small group instruction and individualized support from multiple educators. Each teacher candidate can fill one or more of the differentiated roles above, and collaborate closely with each other and their Supervising Practitioner.

*"Flexibility is the key. Districts, Educators, and Teacher Candidates are balancing so many pieces this year and we are grateful that they are willing to allow our students into their buildings, whether in-person or remotely."*

Educator Preparation Program Representative

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## OPPORTUNITY CULTURE

This [research-backed model for flexible, multi-instructor classrooms](#) is well-suited to a hybrid or remote model. It would necessitate a significant planning period, but pulls together several distinct flexibilities/opportunities for both students and teachers. By designing a Multi-Classroom Leader (MCL) that leads a team of teachers, more students are able to have access to excellent educators and small group support. The MCL is responsible for co-planning, co-teaching, modeling, and coaching the team of teachers and Reach Associates (Ras). The MCL also leads teacher development, data monitoring, and schedule design. Benefits of this model include:

- Reach Associates positions are well-suited for candidates to complete a residency year. Under the guidance of the MCL and teacher team, RAs provide small group support and tutoring. In close partnership with ed prep programs, districts could design a staffing model that creates a clear hiring pipeline while providing teacher candidates with significant opportunities to grow their skills.
- One or more adult and group of students could be remote in this scenario while maintaining high-quality and differentiated instruction in a balance of whole-group, small-group, and individual work time.
- This model maximizes small group work with teachers and RAs. Anecdotal evidence has suggested that small group opportunities are even more valuable in a remote setting to ensure student engagement and allow teachers to monitor student learning.
- Teacher team time - the model schedules included at the link above allow for significant teacher planning/development time to maximize the success of this model.

## ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY: NEXT EDUCATION WORKFORCE

This organization has designed resources to support:

- [Teaming in a pandemic](#)
- [Specializations and advancement pathways](#)
- [Teams of educators with distributed expertise](#)

## ERS COVID COMEBACK MODELS

ERS, a technical assistance partner to DESE focusing on strategic planning for reopening models, designed a set of "[Comeback Models](#)" including student schedules, grouping models, and staffing roles to assist schools and districts as they strive to bring more students back to in-person learning during the pandemic.

### ADDITIONAL FLEXIBILITIES TO PROMOTE FLEXIBLE STAFFING IN 2020-2021

#### For current staff

- Licensed educators can teach up to **50%** out of field
- Individuals with bachelor's degree can serve as long-term sub for **full school year**
- Co-teachers are considered "in-field" **as long as the other co-teacher is appropriately licensed**
- DESE will consider waiver applications **with internal and external postings**

#### Additional staff/support

- Student teachers' ability to provide full-group, small-group and 1:1 instruction, including simultaneous instruction, can **enable core instructional models**
- **Cap on retiree income for the year has been lifted**