



2020 EARLY LEARNING TOUR SAN DIEGO USD TK 4 PROGRAM: SUPPORTING THE WORKFORCE

San Diego Unified School District (District) faced many challenges designing and implementing its TK 4 Program. Perhaps the most critical challenge it had to address and overcome was ensuring that the District's existing workforce was supported — both in terms of providing what they needed for effective classroom teaching and offering critical pathways and support for career advancement.

RECOGNIZING AND HONORING EARLY LEARNING TEACHERS

From the outset, the District felt it was important to recognize the knowledge, expertise, and contributions of every Early Childhood Education (ECE) teacher in its Early Learning program. ECE teachers and staff are licensed by the State of California to meet the social, emotional, and early academic needs of young learners.

By combining the District's Transitional Kindergarten (TK) program and the California State Preschool Program (CSPP) with the need to meet the state's minimum teacher credentialing requirements, the District felt it was important to:

- Bring the knowledge, expertise, and skills of its ECE workforce into the TK 4 Program.
- Cultivate collaborative teaching for the benefit of students.
- Support ECE teachers who aspire to become fully credentialed teachers in the state.

The District designed and began implementing workforce programs to achieve these important objectives.

TEACHER PIPELINE

The District and its teacher's union have a commitment to a teacher pipeline that increases the diversity of their workforce and offers current employees opportunities for career advancement. A career lattice for ECE teachers aspiring to become fully credentialed teachers in California is one of the critical components of the District's approach. This pipeline provides both a pathway and financial support for qualifying staff who successfully complete coursework or training to obtain a teaching credential. Support for staff on this career lattice includes reimbursement of up to \$1,500 per semester (or \$3,000 annually) to cover the cost of tuition, books, and other required fees while completing coursework or training during non-working hours.

In addition to financial reimbursement, the District will support the professional growth of candidates through Early Learning Cohorts that will undergo District-



led quarterly training through professional learning communities designed to augment their credential programs. Alternatively, the District guarantees assistance from an intern support provider for any ECE teacher who chooses to pursue their credential through an internship.

Finally, candidates who complete their programs and meet the requirements for a preliminary teaching credential will be eligible for placement in a credentialed teaching position within the District.

In exchange for this financial and professional support, the District seeks a commitment from each recipient to teach in the District. Any recipient who terminates employment with the District within 12 months of receiving reimbursement must refund the District for the amount of the reimbursement.

MEETING TEACHERS WHERE THEY ARE

Understanding that the web of becoming a credentialed teacher may be overwhelming for existing staff to navigate, the District created programs and processes to bolster those aspiring to become credentialed teachers through two main events.

SPRING ORIENTATION

During this annual event, the District's Human Resource Services Division and its Early Learning Department:

- Share information about other available scholarship opportunities for teachers continuing their programs.
- Provide support to complete the credentialed teacher online application and prepare for the interview process.

INTERVIEW/HIRING EVENT

Each April, the District's Human Resource Services Division hosts an interview and hiring event for any current ECE teacher employed by the District who has or will soon be completing their credential program by the end of the year.

This unique opportunity gives candidates who are current District employees a leg up at employment within the District as a credentialed teacher.

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