

South Dakota Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Pathway District Guidance for Primary Mentor Selection

As part of the SD Teacher Apprenticeship Pathway, districts are required to provide a local mentor for the selected para-apprentice. The assigned mentor must meet the following minimum eligibility requirements:

- **Three years of teaching experience**
- Strong communication skills
- Evidence of strong pedagogy
- Demonstrated commitment to education
- Demonstrated commitment to the local school district
- Demonstrated commitment to the local community

Please note that this mentor may become, but will not necessarily be, the para-apprentice's cooperating teacher when (s)he moves into the student teaching role. Attention should be given to the following elements:

- Existing relationships the para may already have with teachers
- The para's schedule regarding what classrooms or who (s)he may see on a regular basis
- The grade level/subject area the para is pursuing

Mentor responsibilities will include:

1. Attend the Apprenticeship orientation on July 15, 2026 at the MacKay Building in Pierre.
2. Provide 10 hours of mentor support to the apprentice, per semester (fall and spring).
 - a. Mentors will be required to submit a mentor log, signed by themselves and their administrator, to their administrator by the designated date each semester. A template will be provided.
3. Will sign-off on competencies associated with the Readiness Checklist. In cases where the mentor teacher cannot assist with items on the checklist, other teachers may need to be involved. NOTE: The Readiness Checklist is expected to be a work-in-progress throughout enrollment in SD TAP and will not be due until graduation.

Mentor compensation will include:

1. A \$1,000 per year stipend – \$500 per semester with completion of the mentor log. Note: \$500/semester (Fall and Spring) will be paid by the district to the primary mentor as the district's financial support of the program.)
2. Continuing Education Contact hours from the Department of Education to use for certification renewal.
 - a. Continuing education contact hours will be issued for attending the orientation.
 - b. Continuing education contact hours will be issued per semester upon receipt of the completed mentor log.