

Case Study: Hamilton County

This case study illustrates a Grow Your Own partnership between a district and Education Preparation Provider (EPP) that provides innovative, no-cost pathways for aspiring educators to help establish a strong pipeline to train and develop Tennessee teachers.

Overview

In December of 2020, Hamilton County launched a Grow Your Own (GYO) program as a new talent strategy to strengthen their district's overall recruitment efforts. The district partners with four EPPs -- Lipscomb University, Lee University, Tennessee Tech University, and the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga -- to support secondary math, science, and ELA certification, and well as additional K-12 and Special Education endorsements.

Program Reflection

Affordability



Hamilton County Schools prioritize affordability in a strategic model that taps into multiple funding sources. In addition to federal and state funds, Hamilton County has used grants from local workforce boards to support Praxis exam fees, edTPA prep, tutoring, technology, and textbook expenses for candidates. This financial model also allows the district to staff a Community Recruiter and New Teacher Coach who tracks, monitors, and meets with GYO candidates throughout their program. .

Accountability



The program monitors the progress of GYO candidates in regular coaching and mentoring cycles that provide real-time, actionable feedback. Documentation of regular touch points are used in quarterly check-ins that include both district and EPP representatives. Candidates also sign a contract at the beginning of the program that requires each candidate remain in good standing with their partnering university and school-based team.

Performance



The program boasts a 90% retention rate for 75+ participants. The combination of district supports, strong EPP partnerships, intentional recruitment, clear retention practices, and accountability and progress monitoring have led to successful outcomes for both candidate completion and future district employment.