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Home / Opinion / Our Opinion

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OUR OPINION

Local schools lead innovative efforts in teacher training

Sep 8, 2018

In the face of state budget cuts, our local schools are launching innovative training programs for new teachers that will allow their new hires to learn from experienced educators and ultimately enhance students' success in the classroom.

We're referring to the mentorship programs for new teachers in Warren County Public Schools and the Bowling Green Independent School District.

Both programs were launched after funding cuts to the Kentucky Teacher Internship Program, which has been suspended until 2020.

Teacher turnover can be a costly problem for school districts. With many districts facing teacher shortages, some are forced to hire under-qualified candidates.

An August 2017 report from the nonpartisan Learning Policy Institute said some of those vacancies are from teacher retirements. But about two-thirds of teachers leave for other reasons, most because of dissatisfaction with the job.

The report said teacher attrition in the U.S. is about twice as high as in high-achieving jurisdictions like Finland, Singapore and Ontario.

This is why programs like those recently launched by our local school districts are so vital.

Both programs aim to help boost new teacher retention, teacher effectiveness in the classroom and the quality of instruction students receive.

Through a partnership between Warren County Public Schools and Western Kentucky University, teacher mentors can receive a stipend for their commitment and a free course from WKU. This will help take the pressure off teachers when it comes to advancing and succeeding in their profession.

Additionally, the New Teacher Academy Internship program will allow participating teachers to assess themselves and get help with areas where they're struggling, such as connecting with English learner students or other challenges new teachers encounter.



Similarly, the Bowling Green Independent School District launched its own new teacher mentorship program.

The new ASCEND mentoring program is supporting 16 recently hired teachers and is personalized for teachers across grade levels. Its goals are to promote competence in delivering content, maintain high academic expectations for students, maximize instructional time and assess for self-improvement.

BGISD teachers will also benefit from coaching from Anne Padilla, a retired teacher and 2013 inductee into the Kentucky Teacher Hall of Fame with 36 years experience teaching high school.

Students will ultimately benefit from these programs, which is why we applaud the efforts of Warren County Public Schools and the Bowling Green Independent School District.