Michigan’s struggle to find and prepare sufficient numbers of teachers is not unique. Across the U.S., many states are grappling with similar challenges. It’s the states that make effective investments in their educator workforces that will do the best jobs of ensuring skilled, educated talent is available to support future generations.

Here’s a look at what they’re doing:

**NEVADA’S “TEACH NEVADA” SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

The Teach Nevada Scholarship program was built into the state’s general fund in 2015. The program provides scholarships to new students pursuing teacher licensure through state-approved universities, colleges, or approved alternative routes. The tuition assistance is given to those education students who commit to teaching five consecutive years, including three in a high-needs school.

The state may prioritize applicants who are veterans, from disadvantaged backgrounds, or who are pursuing an education degree in a shortage area, such as special education. The funds are administered by the superintendent of public instruction. Awards are granted by the state board of education and can be awarded to approved applicants for up to $24,000. One-quarter of the scholarship is retained by Nevada’s department of education and disbursed to the students after five consecutive years of successful teaching. The remaining amount of the scholarship is used for reimbursement of tuition, books, and fees.

**MASSACHUSETTS TOMORROW’S TEACHERS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

To be eligible for a Tomorrow’s Teachers Scholarship Program, a student must: (i) rank in the top 25 percent of his/her graduating high school class, (ii) be a permanent legal resident of Massachusetts, (iii) agree to enroll and complete a four-year bachelor’s degree program in an eligible college or university leading to teacher certification, and (iv) agree to teach for four years in Massachusetts public schools.

The Tomorrow’s Teachers Scholarship Program provides payment of full tuition and required fees at eligible public colleges and universities. Priority in granting Tomorrow’s Teachers Scholarship awards is given to eligible students who commit to teach in a subject area for which there is a documented teacher shortage in Massachusetts, and for those who commit to a geographic region or school district where there is a documented teacher shortage. Students must maintain a 3.0 cumulative GPA on all college work and agree to teach in a Massachusetts public school one year for each year of scholarship assistance received.
SOUTH CAROLINA TEACHING FELLOWS PROGRAM

The South Carolina Teaching Fellows Program is designed to recruit high-achieving high school seniors into the teaching profession and equip them to become effective and successful educators. The program is funded by an annual allocation from the state’s General Assembly. Fellows receive up to $24,000 in yearly awards (up to $6000 a year for four years) while they attend a Teaching Fellows Institution (TFI) and pursue a degree that will lead to initial teacher certification. Additionally, fellows are offered numerous professional development and leadership opportunities above those offered through the institution’s teacher preparation program. Fellows agree to teach in a South Carolina public school one year for every year they receive the fellowship.

SOUTH DAKOTA ARP TEACHER RETENTION FUNDS

The South Dakota Department of Education will be receiving an additional $127 million from the American Rescue Plan to support the state’s top concerns, for a total of $382 million since March 2021. After surveying the state’s administrators, superintendents, and principals, the three top priorities for these funds will address: (i) supporting strong pedagogy and educational opportunities, (ii) addressing social-emotional and mental health needs, and (iii) addressing teacher retention and recruitment. The SD Department of Education will partner with other departments and outside entities to directly address each priority and secure strong accountability.

NORTH CAROLINA TEACHER FELLOWSHIP

The North Carolina General Assembly annually funds a new cohort of 500 teaching fellows and provides them with scholarships of $6,500 per year for four years to attend a North Carolina university and earn their teaching credentials. The scholarships require four years of teaching in North Carolina public schools; if the four-year teaching commitment is not fulfilled, the scholarship recipient is required to repay the loan with 10 percent interest. As part of this application process, the teaching fellows’ selection committee focuses on applicants’ academic performance (a minimum SAT score of 950 and high school GPA of 2.5) and diversity (approximately 20 percent of scholarship recipients are black, indigenous or people of color; 30 percent are men). In total, approximately 20 percent of applicants are accepted into the teaching fellows program.

It’s time for Michigan to act.

Other states with strong incentive programs will soon win the race for skilled teachers. The economic benefits of their investment will last for generations to come, as their students are better prepared to compete for the jobs of tomorrow.

Michigan can—and must—plan to address its critical educator shortages by funding its own incentive programs.