

**Teacher Academy, High School Pipeline**  
**Dr. Matt Dillon, Superintendent**  
**Petal School District**

**Challenges:**

Fewer Students going into K-12 Education.

Not a big applicant pool to choose from.

Students see 13 years of the good, bad and ugly. Other fields only see the fun stuff on site visits.

The way teachers are treated by students, parents and communities. Shift to teachers lacking support at home.

Teachers leaving state for higher pay. Legislation needs to pull MS to national average. Need to come up with new ways to pay teachers.

Teaching is treated as a fallback plan. Should be there because their hearts are in it.

**Student Approach:**

College visits start early – 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Expose them at an early age.

Change the narrative of teaching. To recruit for Teacher Academy. Utilize the “Why Teach?” bulletin to promote the positives of teaching, given to sophomores:

- Impact Lives
- Job Opportunities Worldwide
- Competitive Salary
- Leadership Opportunities
- Creativity/Art/Sports
- Family friendly work environment
- Retirement/Benefits
- Team Environment

If you complete teacher academy 1 & 2 you are guaranteed interview. If hired receive a \$500 signing bonus.

Rebrand Teacher Academy – not only geared toward elementary. Pair students who want to be coaches with PE at the elementary school.

Recruitment videos

Elementary school utilized as learning lab.

Student 1: Intentional moment – wanted to be a teacher since working with younger siblings. Toured the TA in middle school. Decided to try it. Restored her confidence, worked with elementary and got field experience, found her passion. Learned different ways to teach. You have to be flexible as a teacher.

Student 2: Unintentional moment – She was placed in a family friend’s Special Ed Class as a Teacher Assistant. She was nervous to work with Special Ed Students. She had no idea what she wanted to do but found out it was amazing and it had a huge impact on her. She went to MS State on a college visit and was the only person at the college day who was interested in Special Education.

Include Petal School District in the Petal High School college and career fair. Offer Scholarships through the Petal Education Foundation.

**Staff/Teacher Approach:**

- Change the language and don't discourage people from going into the profession. Promote teaching as a noble cause.
- Teacher Assistant to Teacher Program. Create a cohort of assistants to grow them to teachers.
- WCU accelerated program (3yrs) to complete earlier.
- Residency program lets University Senior Education Majors spend 187 days in the school. It's treated as their first year of teaching. Petal has gotten 23 teachers from this program. They're paid a travel stipend.

Alternate Route – People in the community, looking for career change, get their certification

Recruitment and Retention team – comprised of certified and noncertified staff from every facility. Meet every quarter to talk about how to recruit and retain teachers. Find ways (non pay) to better value employees. Example: better bathrooms, recognition for time, looking into ideas like daycare.

**Question and Answer/Discussion:**

What have you done specifically to retain students? Listen to teachers. Allow them to have decision making power. Give power-let them help choose colleagues. Teacher of the year nominees are all given a letter telling why they were nominated.

- Superintendent Advisory team at every site.
- Shared decision making committee – teachers and students get to give input on issues and problems.
- What avenue to give teacher assistant credit for degree?

The "W" let the teacher assistant do job and count as residency.

1<sup>st</sup> year mentoring program meets monthly and supports new teachers.

Negative gets attention and we need a better platform to tell the positive.

Teacher Assistants live in poverty and work so hard. They need a path to teach and make more money.

1987 state taxes raised for roads/highways and need commitment to Education.

Worked as teacher assistant, construction and drove school bus to make ends meet.

Encourage college sophomores to be teacher assistants to get residency and get in PERS.

Can the PRAXIS be waived for teacher assistants transitioning to teaching?

Recruit students to teacher academy earlier – 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

Important that school districts have retention plan while the teacher academy graduates are in college. Check in with them and bring them back to why they started the program and try to bring to the school district after college graduation.

Solution for the critical shortage schools to bring students back to the district to teach.

### **10:00 Breakout**

Student – Teacher Academy should teach more about the negative aspects/hard stuff in teaching.

Can college credit be earned from teacher academy? Yes, working on it with WCU, still trying to figure out how to do it.

How do we change the IHL/K-12 college credit issue? Need to give dual credit. Stop talking and just do it. It's a barrier to getting students into teacher academy.

Lamar County is having teacher academy students set up CANVAS shells and make materials for teachers to use.

How are you (Petal SD) dealing with the problem are you filling positions? Yes, filling positions every year but the pool is shrinking.

### **11:00 Breakout**

How to attract teachers to high needs areas? Extra stipend.

Hancock County – Grow your own initiative to convert teacher assistant to teacher. Keep them there because they have a vested interest, family, etc.

Leverage scholarship opportunities – business world, Ed. Foundations

Teachers being exempt from state income tax – great experiment.

Extra stipends for additional teacher duties. Petal uses money from Education Foundation, not tied to tax payer money so more freedom.

### **1:00 Breakout**

Great idea for high school students to go into classes when they have free time.

Finding non-monetary ways to reward teachers. Must feel valued. Find opportunities to lead.

Encouraging legislative support

Provide a level of support for young, new teachers. Someone constantly checking on them, providing them with positive feedback, not comparing them to 15 year veteran.

Assign mentor to new teachers. PLC

Are their perks for leadership while still staying a teacher?

### **2:00 Breakout**

Teacher Academy – CTE program with little overhead. Need a teacher with masters.

Pascagoula puts teachers in Teacher Academy their sophomore and junior year. Senior year send to schools as teacher assistant for 2 blocks.

All administrators/teachers should be positive around students regarding Teacher Academy and promote the teaching profession.

Some teacher academy programs are considering changing the name. Pascagoula changed their program to Education, Theory and Practice. Gulfport School District is working on name change.