

Executive Summary: Golden Apple Teacher Recruitment Pipeline Program

As Meridian Community Unit School District #223 continues to navigate the challenges of a highly competitive teacher labor market, it is essential that we adopt proactive and sustainable strategies to recruit and retain exceptional educators. To that end, I am recommending that the Board approve a formal partnership with the Golden Apple Foundation to implement the K-12 Teacher Recruitment Pipeline (TRP) model. This strategic collaboration will provide our district with priority access to a diverse, highly vetted pool of candidates, ensuring that our classrooms are led by teachers who are not only academically distinguished but also committed to long-term success through Golden Apple's comprehensive mentoring and support framework.

The Golden Apple Pipeline: Quality & Diversity

The partnership provides the district with access to two distinct, high-caliber talent pools:

- Golden Apple Scholars: High-potential high school seniors and college students who receive intensive preparation.
- Golden Apple Accelerators: Career-changers and college seniors not currently on a teaching pathway who obtain their license through an expedited 15-month residency program.

Proven Success Metrics

- Academic Strength: 82% of undergraduate Scholars maintain a GPA of 3.5 or higher.
- Persistence: The program's graduation rate is 82%, significantly exceeding the 60% national average.

Strategic Partnership Benefits

The Partnership Package offers a comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy:

1. Priority Recruitment & Placement

- Direct Access: The district will receive a Scholar Resume Book at least quarterly to facilitate early recruitment.
- Targeted Promotion: Our district will receive preferred placement on the Golden Apple Job Board and a custom Partner Profile shared with the Scholar community.
- Hard-to-Staff Support: Golden Apple provides specialized outreach to candidates in high-demand areas such as STEM, bilingual education, and special education.

2. Early Engagement via Scholar Institutes

Undergraduate Scholars participate in summer Scholar Institutes, which include residential classroom teaching experience. We have the opportunity to host these programs locally, allowing our administrators to build relationships with future candidates years before they enter the job market.

3. Professional Mentoring & Performance

To ensure long-term retention, Golden Apple provides Master Teacher mentoring for all new Scholars during their first two years of teaching.

- Direct Feedback: Mentors conduct observations and provide data-informed feedback to improve classroom practice.
- Alignment: Golden Apple ensures this coaching aligns with district leadership and principal expectations.

Financial Terms & Agreement Structure

The TRP model is a performance-based investment. The District only incurs costs if a candidate is successfully hired.

Milestone	Fee Per Scholar	Purpose
Initial Hire	\$5,000	Recruitment and placement fee.
Year 1 Mentoring	\$2,500	Professional support and master teacher coaching.
Year 2 Mentoring	\$2,500	Continued professional development and retention.
Total Investment	\$10,000	Total spread over two years.

Contractual Highlights

- Term: The initial agreement runs from April 2026 through June 30, 2029, with automatic one-year renewals.
- Flexibility: The district retains sole discretion over all hiring decisions.

Recommendation

This partnership allows the District to transition from reactive to proactive recruiting. By joining the Golden Apple TRP, we gain a competitive advantage in attracting top-tier talent while ensuring our new teachers have the mentorship required to succeed and remain in our classrooms.

It is recommended that the Board of Education consider the approval of a formal partnership with the Golden Apple Foundation by adopting the K-12 Teacher Recruitment Pipeline (TRP) model. This strategic investment aims to resolve critical teacher shortages by securing a sustainable pipeline of highly vetted, diverse, and professionally supported educators.