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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MindSpark Learning® Invests in Educator Sustainability with Launch of Momentous ‘Engage New Teachers’ Initiative**

*An Extraordinary Professional Learning Experience to Foster and Retain Emerging Teacher Leaders*

**February 14, 2022 - Denver, Colo.** -- [MindSpark Learning®](#) (MindSpark™), a nonprofit that delivers extraordinary and sustainable learning experiences for educators and professionals, announces the launch of ‘Engage New Teachers’ – designed to humanize teaching and build capacity in emerging teacher leaders. Engage will address the most acute barriers facing new teachers such as optimizing student engagement with equitable classroom management practices and bolstering collaborative support systems for educators. The initiative has a dual approach for not only retaining new teachers but also includes strategies for districts who need to cultivate a new teacher pipeline.

According to recent research gathered from the RAND American Teacher Panel (ATP), 39% of ‘early career’ teachers declared that they have considered leaving or retiring from their current position during the last year. Lynn Gangone, president and CEO of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) recently told CNN, “You take a novice teacher and put (them) into the classroom. How do you expect that individual, brand new out of a program, to be able to teach students who come from all different socioeconomic backgrounds, all different kinds of language backgrounds, all different kinds of family structures and today, with even more mental health issues as a result of the pandemic?”

“Teachers are the greatest contributors to ensuring higher quality education. Recruiting and retaining well-qualified teachers are the biggest challenges we are currently facing. Engage was developed to create a space for connection, collaboration, and belonging,” states MindSpark Learning CEO Kellie Lauth, “The MindSpark community activates teachers and ensures they are sustained by a vibrant ecosystem surrounding them.”

MindSpark introduced the inaugural cohort of Engage New Teachers with 60% of participants from rural communities and 40% identifying as people of color. Engage participants shared, “I think the best part was being encouraged to be authentic and honest and having a group of

Commented [RG1]: people of color since that's an identifier? They are all teachers...

Commented [MR2R1]: sure

people willing to do that even when my administrator was present,” and “...Being given tangible tools to use on a regular basis instead of being given tips and tricks without it feeling doable.”

Engage is intended to augment traditional teacher induction programs to galvanize educator sustainability. The next cohort launches in the summer of 2022. Consider registering your new class of teachers for the 2022/2023 school year or early career teachers with up to eight years' experience. Please [reach out](#) to learn more and about district discounts.

Are you an existing or retired veteran teacher? MindSpark is currently [seeking mentors](#) for future Engage New Teacher cohorts. Please bring your wisdom and expertise as we elevate the next generation of educators.

### **About MindSpark Learning**

MindSpark Learning® (MindSpark™) is a nonprofit that empowers educators to solve society's biggest challenges by providing transformative professional learning experiences. As social designers, MindSpark creates and facilitates professional development opportunities using a foundation of innovation, equity, entrepreneurship, and workforce literacy.

MindSpark has impacted more than 34,812 Educators, 1,074,360 students and 6,846 schools in all 50 states plus D.C, and 88 counties. MindSpark nurtures meaningful relationships with more than 650 industry and community partners. For more information, please visit [www.mindspark.org](http://www.mindspark.org).

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## Resources:

[New Teacher Competitor Information.xlsx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

[Guiding Lights: Novice Educators Pair Up With Veteran Teachers | Edutopia](#) (2007)

Schools are simply failing to hold onto their newest hires -- nearly 50 percent leave the profession within five years, Ingersoll reports -- and mentoring is rapidly proving to be a reliable way to keep them.

Factoring in recruitment and training, the Alliance for Excellent Education estimates the national cost of turnover at \$4.87 billion a year.

[Engage New Teachers - Session 1 - SurveyMonkey Dashboard](#)

"I think being given tangible tools to use on a regular basis instead of being given tips and tricks without it feeling doable."

"Felt comfortable to share! Sarah is a very welcoming, kind and FUN person."

"Learning that others share similar stressors and anxiety"

"I think the best part was being encouraged to be authentic and honest and having a group of people willing to do that even when my administrator was present."

[Teachers are leaving and few people are choosing the field. Experts are sounding the alarm - CNN](#) (2022)

Lynn Gangone, president and CEO of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) told CNN, "You take a novice teacher and put (them) into the classroom. How do you expect that individual, brand new out of a program, to be able to teach students who come from all different socioeconomic backgrounds, all different kinds of language backgrounds, all different kinds of family structures and today, with even more mental health issues as a result of the pandemic?"

To combat a [dangerous teacher and substitute shortage](#), some states recently opted for solutions like reducing requirements needed to lead a classroom, which industry leaders say is a band-aid solution and not a long-term answer to recruit qualified people to schools.

The AACTE [recently expressed](#) support for the Educators for America Act, which was [introduced](#) in the Senate last year and calls for an annual \$500 million to support educator prep programs, among other provisions to address early outreach and preparation.

### Existing cohort

- % Rural – 3/5 – 60%
- % Female 4/5 – 80%
- % Diverse 2/5 – 40%

## CTA

- Become a mentor – retiree – form action
- Please contact us about district packages and discounts

## Details

- Change thinking (mindsets) before behavior
- Scratch the car – just don't total it – failure
- Reward for growth – not failure
- Long term PD
- Cohort based
- Retention
- First cohort just kicked off - quote from someone
- Hiring new class of teachers
- Enrich induction process

This comprehensive professional learning experience includes a virtual summer institute integrated with step-by-step support through quarterly huddles. The experience has both an internal by fostering self-advocacy and autonomy and external focus through mentorships and relationships with industry partners.

## New program details

- Summer start date
- Virtual bootcamp – quarterly check-ins
- Fee-based with district discounts
- 0-5 – others who could benefit from experience

## Existing website content

### [Engage Series — MindSpark](#)

Teachers are the greatest contributor to ensuring high quality education and recruiting and retaining well-qualified teachers is one of the biggest challenges we are currently facing. Engage New Teacher is prioritizing educators and addresses the need for wellbeing and upskilling through a professional development series unlike any other. When a teacher receives mentoring, collaboration, necessary resources, and is part of a strong teacher network, first-year turnover is cut by more than half. However, just 3% of new teachers receive this support.

## Program Outcomes

- Build a like-minded support network providing educators with guidance during the early years of their career (and beyond!)
- Stay accountable to actionable goals and measures of success
- Learn best practices for personal and professional self-sustainability
- Develop communication, resilience and advocacy skills
- Establish effective habits and routines that support a healthy work life balance
- Thrive with a supportive mentor
- Includes certificate for 18 hours of Professional Development

To increase educator retention and satisfaction, we will focus on sustainable work habits and mindsets that are not only essential to new educators, but to any professional lifespan. This will be a space to problem solve unique challenges you are facing through an iterative action framework with support from peer mentors and experienced mindSpark professionals.

#### Session One

- How to think like a scientist
- Be a scientist: WHY the best place to be a learner is from the role of a scientist.
- Master the art of telling a story.
- Create an action plan to prioritize personal wellness and establish a scientific mindset.

#### Session Two

- Own your learning and develop a wellness plan.
- Develop mindsets and habits to care for ourselves and to create a positive and consistent environment.
- How to use data to tell your story.
- Create an action plan to prioritize personal wellness and establish a scientific mindset.

#### Session Three

- Building partnerships by building relationships
- Create action plan to build personal development and partnerships
- Using your story to build bridges and connect partners
- Reflect and act on data pertaining to personal development

#### **Additional Scholarly Research**

Another article: Relationship between teacher empowerment and job satisfaction: "Empowerment includes several steps, with an emphasis on the need to continuously practice these steps to achieve the desired outcomes (Nunan et al., 2019). At a micro level, teacher empowerment can be conceptualized as providing teachers with the privilege to exercise professional reasoning with the daily curriculum and teaching subjects. On a higher level, it is conceptualized as the administration's investment in teachers by giving them the opportunity and freedom to be involved in the regulation of school objectives and policies (Bleumers et al., 2012). At least two different paths lead to successful TE. Firstly, the schools must provide a base that encourages teachers to work collectively for school improvement and professional growth (Bach, 2019). Secondly, after helping teachers discover how much they have to offer and ensuring that they are confident in their skills and knowledge, they should not be excluded from school-related policies (Washburn & Olbrys, 2018). As shown in (Figure 1), Hobbs and Moreland (2009) uncovered six aspects of empowerment which were also proposed by Short and Rinehart (1992a); these are the decision-making (DM), professional growth (PG), status (ST), self-efficacy (SE), autonomy (AU), and impact (IM)." The findings have also revealed that decision-making and self-efficacy among teachers had a significant impact on job satisfaction, followed by professional growth. Conversely, autonomy, impact, and status among teachers were negatively linked to job satisfaction. The findings confirm the significant effects of teacher empowerment on job satisfaction.

Personal factors as correlates of teacher turnover (highly significant): Number of young children at home, career satisfaction, and distance to the school. Teacher qualification correlates (significant): standard certification, and STEM specialty. School's Organizational Characteristics (highly significant): Administrative support and mentoring. School Resources (highly significant): teaching materials. Student characteristics (highly significant): student achievement.

External/policy factors as correlates of teacher turnover. Accountability and workforce (highly significant): merit pay, Principal effectiveness score, employment rate, salary, teacher evaluation, and late hiring.

"Our results suggest turnover is higher among teachers with higher academic ability, STEM teachers, special education teachers, younger teachers, and less experienced teachers."

"Demographic trends suggest that policymakers looking to invest in recruiting higher quality educators need to recognize two important stipulations. First, teachers have an ever-increasing number of employment options outside of the education sector. And, second, there is a need to strengthen schools' ability to compete for young and talented teachers in high-need subject areas. Finally, the finding that minority race teachers have reduced odds of turnover relative to White teachers also deserves more attention, especially in schools serving larger proportions of non-White students, because research finds sizeable positive effects for non-White students who have non-White teachers."

"The second major strand in our conceptual framework focuses on school factors, and some of the most consistent evidence from our meta-analysis supports working conditions and salary as highly influential in teachers' turnover decisions. We find teachers are less likely to turnover when they are satisfied with the school environment or when they report adequate support from administrators. The same is true when there are fewer disciplinary problems in the school, when a more effective principal leads their school or when salaries are higher. In addition to the importance of salary, these findings suggest other effective strategies for retaining teachers are factors that school leaders have the power to control, such as creating a consistent approach to discipline and providing teachers with opportunities for professional development."

"For instance, teachers working in urban areas have more alternative options in schools than teachers in rural areas, and teachers who have more classroom autonomy are more likely to stay than those with less autonomy. Our results suggest increasing teacher salaries can increase teacher retention. In contrast to working conditions and salary, we find that the demographic characteristics of students in their schools are not significantly correlated with teacher turnover. Together the results for working conditions and student body characteristics suggest that teachers will likely stay in schools serving higher proportions of traditionally disadvantaged students if they feel supported and are satisfied with their working conditions."

"One of the major developments in the teacher turnover literature in recent years has been a greater focus on external/policy factors that will likely affect teacher turnover, such as retention bonuses, teacher evaluation, and merit pay. First, we find evidence to suggest that retention bonuses, which directly incentivize teachers to stay, are correlated with lower odds of turnover. Second, contrary to concerns about the adverse effects of teacher evaluations and accountability, we find that performance evaluations do not create negative sorting. Third, we find merit pay is linked with reduced teacher turnover, adding to previous research finding positive effects of merit pay on student achievement, and suggesting teachers are attracted to pay schedules that recognize their performance. As education systems search for ways to

recruit and retain a more diverse and higher-quality workforce with limited resources, our work suggests the higher leverage approach may be differentiated compensation systems as opposed to across-the-board pay raises."