Frequently asked questions
Financial sustainability of Next Education Workforce™ models

"I can see how these team-based models would be better for both students and educators, but won't it cost a bajillion dollars to implement a 'spicy' model?"

It *could* cost a bajillion dollars to build a team-based model with many types of educators, but it doesn't have to. As shown in Table 1 below, the associated costs of the one-teacher, one-classroom staffing model and a "spicy" team-based staffing model are comparable. In this example, the spicy model is just $12K more expensive. What do we get for that differential? (1) A stipend for the Lead Teacher, (2) a paid teacher resident, (3) two CityYear Student Success Coaches, (4) a dedicated special educator, (5) an upskilled paraeducator, (6) a set of project-based mentors and (7) an annual subscription to AI-based tutoring for every student. Cut one of the Student Success Coaches and the team-based model is $3K less expensive.

The example assumes the loss of the salary and benefits of one lowest-paid teacher. The specifics will vary by context, but before we worry too much about that missing position, we need to acknowledge that many school systems have vacancies. Those positions are often unfilled or are staffed by un-/under-qualified educators. This may not be the case in every context, and it may be impossible (contractually, politically) to not hire for a teaching position in some contexts. In that case, other means will be necessary.[1]

There are two additional expenses that the role-by-role cost comparison does not capture. First, it is imperative that educator teams have planning time. For team-based models to work, schools must figure out how to create additional time for teams. They can do so in a variety of ways, including leveraging community educators to teach high-interest electives while the teachers co-plan, modestly increasing class sizes to create double planning blocks and relinquishing weekly all-staff meeting time to allow individual teams to meet.

A second expense not captured in Table 1 involves professional learning. Most successful transitions to these new staffing models require time and training for leaders and educators — whether that is working directly with our team at ASU or carving out the time to do this work during summers, after hours or hiring substitutes to cover while teachers are engaged in professional learning. This costs money, but school systems can often use Title II funds or other existing professional development dollars to help offset these costs.

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[1] For other ways to shift costs and time to make Next Education Workforce models more financially sustainable, please see this resource that we developed collaboratively with Education Resource Strategies: https://workforce.education.asu.edu/collection/sustainable-financial-models

TABLE 1. Comparison of approximate costs to the staff in a one-teacher, one-classroom model and a "spicy" Next Education Workforce team-based staffing model.
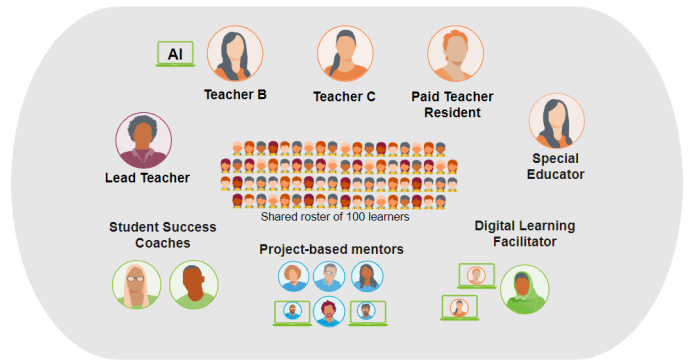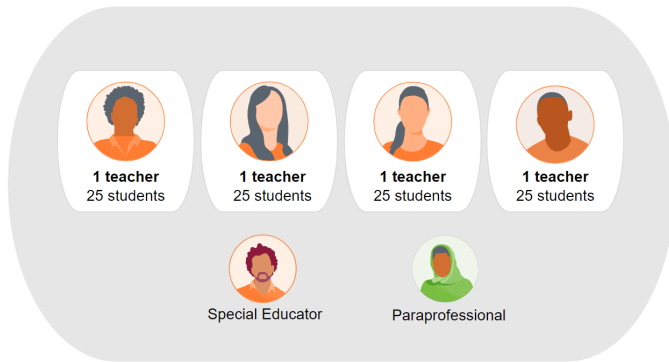
One-teacher, one-classroom Staffing Model	
Role	**Cost**
Teacher A (Salary $70K, Benefits $17.5K)	$88K
Teacher B (Salary $55K, Benefits $13.75K)	$69K
Teacher C (Salary $50K, Benefits $12.5K)	$63K
Teacher D (Salary $45K, Benefits $11.25K)	$56K
Special Educator (Salary $60K, Benefits $15K) (Case load is shared across multiple teachers' classrooms)	$75K
Paraprofessional (Hourly wage + benefits; shared across four teachers' classrooms)	$20K
GRAND TOTAL	**$371K**

Team-based Staffing Model	
Role	**Cost**
Lead Teacher (Salary $75K, Benefits $18.75K)	$94K
Teacher B (Salary $55K, Benefits $13.75K)	$69K
Teacher C (Salary $50K, Benefits $12.5K)	$63K
2 Student Success Coaches ($15K each through CityYear partnership[2])	$30K
Team-Based Special Educator (Salary $60K, Benefits $15K) (Assumes case load is high enough to associate a 1.0 FTE with single team)	$75K
Digital Learning Facilitator (Higher than paraeducator hourly wage + benefits)	$23K
Project-Based Mentors (Partnership with local industry, coordinated by Teacher B)	$0
Paid Teacher Resident	$20K
AI Tutors (Khanmigo is $9/mo/student)[3]	$9K
GRAND TOTAL	**$383K**

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[2] CityYear charges school districts $150K/year for 10 Corps members and a coach. https://www.cityyear.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/DeloitteWhitePaperSingles_03.2018-1.pdf
[3] https://qz.com/ai-tutors-for-students-khan-academy-1850807961