

Residency programs endorsed in ESEA reauth bill

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Key points:

- Teacher, principal residency programs to be funded under Title II
- Clinical preparation at core of programs
- Model is used for teachers in high-need schools

Teacher and principal residency programs which provide clinical teacher preparation are included in the ESEA reauthorization bill, the [Every Student Succeeds Act](#), S. 1177.

"School districts and higher education programs are looking to the residency model to completely redefine how a new teacher is prepared," Tamara Azar, chief external relations officer for the [National Center for Teacher Residencies](#), told *Education Daily*®.

"The growth of residencies in the past few years is a recognition of the importance of extended, school-based preparation experiences. School districts need a consistent, reliable pipeline of effective new teachers, and residencies around the country are delivering that."

Under NCLB, residencies were an approved activity under the [Teacher Quality Partnership Grant Program](#) that provided competitive grants to partnerships of institutions of higher education and high-need districts aimed at better preparing educators.

Residencies are garnering support from education groups. For instance, NCTR recently received funding from the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#) to be a teacher preparation transformation center.

Title II of the ESEA conference report supports residencies under Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High Quality Teachers, Principals, and Other School Leaders, with grants to SEAs and LEAs authorized to be appropriated at "\$2,295,830,000 for each of fiscal years 2017 through 2020."

Federal support

Sen. Michael Bennet, D-Colo., championed residencies in the legislation modeled from the [Denver Teacher Residency Program](#), according to a press release.

Specifically, states may use Title II, Part A "Supporting Effective Instruction" funds for "reforming or improving teacher, principal, or other school leader preparation programs, such as through establishing teacher residency programs and school leader residency programs," according to the bill text.

Additionally, under Title II, Part B, the Teacher and School Leader Incentive Fund Grant program to be awarded competitively for performance-based compensation systems, LEAs alone or in partnership with other entities can use the

funds toward "establishing or strengthening school leader residency programs and teacher residency programs," according to the bill text. Such grants would be provided for up to three years.

Also under Part B, the School Leader Recruitment and Support program will provide competitive grants for up to five years to "improve the recruitment, preparation, placement, support, and retention of effective principals and other school leaders in high-need schools . . . including through new or alternative path ways or school leader residency programs," according to the bill text.

Grants are to be awarded to LEAs and SEAs, or an SEA in partnership with LEAs serving high-need schools.

The [National Education Association](#) supports residency program in preparing teachers to enter classrooms because "ensuring that beginning teachers are indeed profession-ready requires participation in a teacher residency program," said Donna Harris-Aikens, NEA's director of education policy and practice.

In defining residencies, the legislation emphasizes clinical experiences.

For instance, a residency program for school leaders is "a school-based principal or other school leader preparation program in which a prospective principal or other school leader -- for one academic year, engages in sustained and rigorous clinical learning with substantial leadership responsibilities and an opportunity to practice and be evaluated in an authentic school setting; and during that academic year -- participates in evidence-based coursework . . . , that is integrated with the clinical residency experience; and receives ongoing support from a mentor principal or other school leader, who is effective."

A teacher residency program "means a school based teacher preparation program in which a prospective teacher -- for not less than 1 academic year, teaches alongside an effective teacher, as determined by the state or local educational agency, who is the teacher of record for the classroom," according to the bill text.

Harris-Aikens also noted the importance of clinical training to bring teaching "theory into practice," adding that "a residency allows candidates to prove that they are profession-ready by demonstrating their subject matter and pedagogical content knowledge through a classroom-based performance assessment."

Azar explained that residencies are also popular because of their partnerships with school districts to produce teachers based on the district's needs.

"A key difference between residencies and traditional teacher prep is that residencies prioritize student and district needs - from academic achievement gaps to human resources issues like chronic shortage areas -- as the driving force behind the preparation programming," she said.

"Decisions on recruitment, selection, clinical experiences, coursework and ongoing support all must derive from a clear understanding of what an effective educator must know and be able to do in that partner school district."

The residency model has impact, Azar said, explaining that NCTR residencies have produced "more than 3,000 graduates [who] are working in high need schools around the country -- and they stay at high rates. Our partner programs have an average three-year retention rate of 84 percent and five-year retention rate of 71 percent."

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