

Recommendations for State Support for Effective Teacher Residencies

As states work to identify high-impact strategies for school improvement, improving teacher preparation should play a central role. States and school districts can improve teacher quality – and student growth – by providing dedicated support for clinical-based preparation models, thereby ensuring that new educators enter the classroom ready to meet students’ needs from day one.

States and districts are increasingly turning to teacher residencies as a key strategy in improving student achievement and teacher effectiveness. The flexibility provided under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) facilitates this approach.

National Center for Teacher Residencies

Founded in 2007, the National Center for Teacher Residencies (NCTR) is the only organization in the nation dedicated to developing, supporting, and accelerating the impact of teacher residency programs. NCTR partners with school districts, charter management organizations, institutions of higher education, not-for-profits, and states to develop teacher residency programs as quality pipelines of effective and diverse new teachers.

NCTR supports 22 partner programs that are preparing over 750 residents, with 3,200 graduates teaching across the country in high-need schools and subject areas. Data from the NCTR Network of residencies indicates that the residency model increases student achievement; prepares teachers for the rigors of high need schools; increases teacher retention; generates high principal satisfaction rates; and increases the diversity of the local teacher corps.²

Definition of a Teacher Residency Program in the Every Student Succeeds Act

‘Teacher Residency Program’ is defined as a school-based teacher preparation program in which a prospective teacher, for not less than one 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, receives concurrent instruction during the year, through courses that may be taught by local educational agency personnel or by faculty of the teacher preparation program; and in the teaching of the content area in which the teacher will become certified or licensed; and acquires effective teaching skills, as demonstrated through completion of a residency program, or other measure determined by the state, which may include a teacher performance assessment. (ESEA, Sec. 2002(5))

¹ States are defined as the collective authorities of the State Education Authority (SEA), Legislature; Board of Regents or Higher Education Commission; and outside stakeholder groups (funders, advocacy groups, etc.). District and Local Education Authority (LEA) refers to traditional school districts, individual charter schools, and charter management organizations.

² National Center for Teacher Residencies. (2015). *Network Impact Overview*. Research Brief.

The Residency Model

Teacher residencies are the most comprehensive model of teacher preparation in the nation. Residencies play an important role in supporting district human capital strategies by creating a pathway that responds directly to the hiring needs of school districts. In addition, residencies provide career advancement for experienced teachers to act as mentors, while developing highly effective new teachers that are capable of impacting student achievement from the moment they enter the classroom as a teacher of record.

Residencies blend a rigorous full-year classroom apprenticeship for pre-service teachers with a carefully aligned sequence of academic coursework, either through an institution of higher education (IHE) or other certification provider. Teacher residents experience extensive opportunities to learn how to teach by working alongside a mentor teacher in the district in which he or she will eventually teach. Coursework is tailored to district context, with residents learning the district's core instructional initiatives and curriculum during the training year. Teacher residency programs typically require that candidates commit to teach for a minimum of three years, and often four years.

Why Teacher Residencies?

States and districts across the country are looking at teacher residencies as an evidence-based cornerstone to improve student achievement by addressing teacher effectiveness. Early impact data shows teacher residencies benefit schools and students by:

- **PROVIDING A CONSISTENT PIPELINE OF BETTER-PREPARED NEW TEACHERS** resulting in significantly improved new teacher performance. Residents consistently are more effective in five key areas predictive of teacher effectiveness: classroom instruction and pedagogy, data use, establishing the classroom learning environment, culturally responsive teaching, and professionalism and leadership.³ Graduates of NCTR Network residencies have outscored other new teachers on teacher performance assessments; students in classrooms led by residency graduates outperformed other students in the same tested subjects and grade levels.
- **RECRUITING HIGH NUMBERS OF DIVERSE CANDIDATES.** In 2015-16, 45% percent of residents in NCTR Network residencies identified as people of color, increasing the likelihood that students experience the academic benefits, including increased student achievement, of being in classrooms of more teachers of their own race/ethnicity.^{4,5} For example, the Boston Teacher Residency, a partnership of the Boston Plan for Excellence and Boston Public Schools, has prepared more than 600 graduates for the system; nearly 50% of those candidates are teachers of color. BTR has been recognized nationally for its efforts to improve the diversity of the Boston teaching force.
- **MEETING STUDENT AND DISTRICT NEEDS BY REDUCING TURNOVER AND FILLING CHRONIC SHORTAGE AREAS.** Residency graduates stay in the classroom at high rates, reducing the negative effects of turnover on student achievement.⁶ NCTR Network residencies report a three-year teacher retention rate of 80 percent, and 70 percent at five years.⁷ In NCTR Network surveys, mentor teachers reported high satisfaction and spoke about how much they learned and improved in their own instruction.⁸
- **PROVIDING DIRECT VALUE AND IMPROVEMENT TO SCHOOL COMMUNITIES AND CLASSROOMS** where they train and teach, especially in the hardest to staff subject areas and districts. Principals and mentor teachers value having a dedicated co-teacher in the classroom for a year; in NCTR's 2015 stakeholder surveys, 100% of principals reported that participating with the residency improved student learning and achievement at their school and said participating with the residency had positively impacted the culture of their school.^{9,10}

3 National Center for Teacher Residencies. (2014). *Building Effective Teacher Residencies*.

4 National Center for Teacher Residencies. (2015). *Network Impact Overview*. Research Brief.

5 Egalite, Kasida & Winters. (2015). Representation in the classroom: The effect of own-race teachers on student achievement. *Economics of Education Review*, 45 (44-52).

6 Ronfeldt, Langford, Loeb, and Wyckoff. (2013). How teacher turnover harms student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal*, 50(1), pp. 4-36.

7 National Center for Teacher Residencies. (2015). *Network Impact Overview*. Research Brief.

8 Read more about mentors in NCTR partner residency programs in a brief about their experiences.

9 National Center for Teacher Residencies. (2014). *Building Effective Teacher Residencies*.

10 National Center for Teacher Residencies. (2015). *Network Impact Overview*. Research Brief.

Elements of Successful Residencies

In *Building Effective Teacher Residencies*, NCTR identified the components present in high quality teacher residency programs.¹¹

- 1. PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION:** Residencies are partnerships among high need schools, preparation providers, and other community organizations. Partners in the residency share the same values: common impact goals, a collaborative culture, clear teacher effectiveness rubrics, and a growth mindset.
- 2. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION:** The selection process for both residents and mentors is rigorous and intentional, in order to best assess candidates for the characteristics and skills known to produce strong outcomes for students.
- 3. COACHING AND FEEDBACK:** Structured coaching and feedback systems ensure that residents engage in a meaningful and mindful classroom teaching experience. Content and pedagogy are built around the classroom experience and aligned to what matters for students.
- 4. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION:** An evaluation system focuses on continual improvement — for residents, mentors, and the residency program itself.

Creating a Pathway to Sustained Impact

Through the launch and support of more than two dozen residencies, the development of a catalog of research work, and ongoing new site development efforts, NCTR has identified key components of effective teacher preparation. (See box: **Elements of Successful Residencies**)

As states navigate launching and sustaining teacher residencies and clinically-based models of preparation, they can draw on the resources and innovations that NCTR has developed and advanced in implementing the model. When developing policy, states must consider several crucial elements for residencies and other clinical-based preparation models to be successful in preparing and supporting effective educators.

Policy Areas and Recommendations for State Action

A continuum of residency program implementation exists across states; some states are recent residency adopters,¹² while others have utilized residencies in high-need districts for many years.¹³ It is important to realize that no two states have the same experience with residency programs. However, in all phases of implementation, states can have significant influence on maximizing clinically-based residencies' impact on student achievement and improving teacher preparation systems.

Building on existing strategic priorities and on the flexibility provided to states and districts under the *Every Student Succeeds Act*, NCTR has identified key policy areas in which states can use existing state authority and expanded flexibility to play a significant role in creating and sustaining teacher residencies.

There are four main policy areas in which states can play a decisive leadership role to support teacher residencies through legislation and regulation. These policy areas help to create a supportive environment for launching and sustaining high quality teacher residencies. Ultimately, with the incorporation of teacher residencies and the components of high quality clinical preparation broadly, states will see sustainable progress toward achieving long-term achievement goals for students.

FOUR AREAS FOR POLICY CONSIDERATION

- 1. PARTNERSHIP AND STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION:** Convene, encourage, and define collaboration between stakeholders;
- 2. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION:** Attract and retain high potential teacher candidates;
- 3. COACHING AND FEEDBACK:** Define and support effective mentoring, and require quality mentoring practices in teacher preparation programs; and,
- 4. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION:** Promote programs that graduate effective teachers.

¹¹ National Center for Teacher Residencies. (2014). *Building Effective Teacher Residencies*

¹² For example, Louisiana's Believe and Prepare requires aspiring teachers to experience at least one full year of practice through an apprenticeship or residency as part of the preparation program.

¹³ For example, Boettcher Teachers Program, Denver Teacher Residency, and Denver Student Teacher Residency (DSTR) have worked to serve the Denver Public Schools community, as well as other school districts around the state, beginning in 2003 and most recently with DSTR launching in 2015.

Partnership and Stakeholder Collaboration

Imperative to launching and sustaining residencies is creating authentic partnerships and facilitating collaboration between and across schools, districts (LEAs), and institutes of higher education (IHEs). The state can play a critical role in fostering this collaboration by defining, convening, incentivizing, and enforcing collaboration between these key stakeholders.

POLICY ACTIONS CAN INCLUDE:

Data-Focused Policies:

- Define teacher preparation partnerships as a data-driven relationship between districts and educator preparation programs (EPP).
- Maintain data systems to provide for an open exchange of data across stakeholders, including potential teachers, for program improvement and candidate recruitment.
 - Collect data and issue reports on supply and demand, candidate profiles, and district academic and human resource needs.
- As part of program approval, create clear guidelines and goals for partnership and collaboration across preparation stakeholders.
- Provide technical assistance to establish partnerships based on student- and district-demonstrated need, data sharing, and a common definition of effective teaching.

Funding Opportunities:

- Provide incentives for collaboration across preparation programs and LEAs to create teacher residencies.
 - Use competitive grants to encourage partnerships to create residencies as models of high quality clinical preparation.
- Use the flexibility and funding provided in ESSA to support and expand residencies, including dedicating funds from Title II, Part A or B State Activities allocation, to blend with funding from districts, IHEs, and other community partners.
 - ESSA's Title II Teacher Quality State Grants provide that states may develop or assist school districts in developing incentives to recruit and retain teachers in low-income schools and school districts, and in high-need subjects. SEAs may also use funds to reform teacher/ leader preparation programs, mentoring, and professional development.
- Promote district creation and expansion of residencies and other clinical-based preparation partnerships by providing state funds to match district Title II funding, to encourage LEA investment and blended funding from IHE and other partners.
- Create state-level, innovation-based financial models for improving teacher preparation, such as social impact bonds or opportunity compacts, to fund residencies, based on money spent to recruit teachers and the costs of teacher turnover.
- Provide additional funding and support to schools that act as a training site or to establish "teaching schools" for candidates or residents.

CASE STUDY

Richmond Teacher Residency

One example of a residency program that has been successful in maximizing federal funding is the Richmond Teacher Residency (RTR) in Richmond, Virginia. In partnership with the Richmond Public Schools, Virginia Commonwealth University, and the Center for Teacher Leadership, RTR has utilized federal Teacher Quality Partnership Grants in combination with \$500,000 in state dollars to prepare residents in high need subjects and grades. RTR prepares new teachers in elementary, middle and secondary math and science, and special education.

Recruitment and Selection

States can improve access to effective teachers for high need students and reduce churn in schools by attracting and retaining high-potential teachers. States can take additional steps to address equitable access to effective educators in high need schools by improving teacher preparation to have a specific focus on recruiting and selecting high potential candidates in service to high need students and schools.

POLICY ACTIONS CAN INCLUDE:

Teacher Incentives:

- Provide grants, scholarships, and/or tuition forgiveness in exchange for teaching in hard-to-staff, low performing schools, and/or high needs subjects and grades.
 - Use state funds to match federal programs that provide grants and loan forgiveness to teachers.
- Expand eligibility for state grant and loan programs for teachers, ensuring that graduate-level candidates and participants in non-traditional teacher preparation pathways that are operated by IHEs, districts, and/or non-profit organizations are eligible to receive benefits.
- Support districts to prioritize hiring for candidates who successfully complete a residency program. Incentives such as priority hiring, entering as a second year teacher in the salary system, or offering guaranteed placement contracts for residency graduates are possible strategies.

Provider Incentives:

- Use state loan and grant programs for preparation providers to recruit and prepare candidates from diverse racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds.
- Use state Title II funds, and encourage districts to use LEA Title II funds, to support the recruitment and retention of effective teachers who teach in high need schools, subjects and grades.

CASE STUDY

The South Carolina Teachers Loan Programs

The South Carolina Teachers Loan Programs include loans and loan forgiveness for applicants who teach in South Carolina public schools in critical subject or geographic areas. Graduate level candidates are eligible for up to \$5,000 per year, for a maximum benefit of \$20,000; teachers who teach in both a critical subject and critical geography area may have their loans forgiven at a rate of 33 1/3%, or \$5,000 per year for each year of full time teaching.

Coaching and Feedback

High-quality clinical training models depend on positioning teacher candidates as co-teachers in classrooms and having school environments that support both the mentor teacher and the resident.¹⁴ Mentor teachers are critical to the success of teacher residency programs and other clinically-based models. New teachers must emerge from preparation programs learner-ready,¹⁵ with the ability to start teaching effectively on day one. States should support schools, districts and EPPs to choose teachers as mentors who have demonstrated impact on student learning and can model effective practice. States should also provide incentives to improve professional growth opportunities and better working conditions for mentors.

POLICY ACTIONS CAN INCLUDE:

Selectivity-Focused Policies:

- Require mentors who host student teachers to demonstrate effective teaching and participate in a quality/approved mentoring professional development program.
- Require teacher preparation programs to ensure high quality clinical placements for candidates in the classrooms of mentor teachers who are selected using rigorous criteria.
- Develop and offer professional development on mentoring best practices in order to build a “deep bench” of teacher mentors statewide.
- Partner with teacher preparation programs to ensure every new teacher candidate is paired with a mentor or cooperating teacher who is equipped to mentor a novice.
- Clarify legislation, regulations, and/or policies to ensure high-quality mentors and clinical staff are not discouraged from supporting teacher preparation programs based on criteria that are not connected to effective teaching. For example, review policies to ensure that district-based staff or adjunct faculty who do not have doctorates or are certified in a different content area are not prevented from acting as mentor teachers.

Compensation-Focused Policies:

- Create an advanced career ladder designation for mentors who are effective classroom teachers.
- Formally recognize residency program mentors as a promoted or advanced classroom position.
- Compensate mentors who are trained and host residents or teacher candidates in other clinically-intensive preparation programs with a state mentoring stipend or through grants to districts.
- Examine and promote new models of teacher leadership that give mentors reduced classroom loads and/or release time to participate in professional learning communities.

CASE STUDY

Mid-Valley Consortium for Teacher Education

An example of improving the quality of clinical-based preparation with professional development for mentors and teacher educators is the Mid-Valley Consortium for Teacher Education. The Consortium was formed to coordinate the work of several Virginia teacher preparation institutions and surrounding school districts to recruit and prepare teacher educators to be “exemplary role models for effective teaching and strong mentors for their student teachers.” The Consortium trains 50-100 clinical faculty per year, with over 650 trained teachers.

¹⁴ Mentor teachers may also be called cooperating teachers, clinical educators, or master teachers.

¹⁵ Council of Chief State School Officers. (2012). *Our Responsibility, Our Promise* report called on States to ensure that new teachers enter the classroom “learner-ready” by focusing on teacher and principal preparation.

Assessment and Evaluation

States must ensure teacher certification and program approval promotes programs that graduate effective teachers. The alignment of teacher preparation practices to the standards for program approval and with requirements for licensure/certification are policy areas directly under a state's purview. The Council of Chief State School Officers identified licensure; program approval; and data collection, analysis, and reporting as the key levers of change under the state's authority to improve educator preparation. States should examine these areas when seeking to support and sustain teacher residencies.

POLICY ACTIONS CAN INCLUDE:

Preparation Program Requirements:

- Require performance-based assessments for student teachers to demonstrate effective teaching practices with impact on student learning, that are aligned to state and/or district standards for teacher effectiveness, and that apply to all teacher preparation programs as a basis for certification.
- Encourage innovation in teacher preparation curriculum and its delivery without constraints for overly prescriptive content or course-hour requirements.
- Incorporate a requirement for robust evaluation as part of innovative programming to inform the field.
- Collect and share teacher performance data publicly with stakeholders, connecting candidates with educator preparation programs for continuous improvement purposes.
 - Use data on student achievement and teacher supply and demand to support preparation programs in targeted recruitment and selection.
- Require evidence of program implementation and impact in program approval standards for all teacher preparation programs. All programs should be held to one set of performance standards and program approval guidelines, based on teacher performance, student growth, and stakeholder feedback (including students and school leaders).

Certification Requirements:

- Examine certification requirements to ensure that extended, clinically-based experiences incorporate ongoing performance assessment and are a core component of approved programs.
- Offer reciprocity/portability of certification to other states for candidates who complete a residency program.

CASE STUDY

The Tennessee State Board of Education

The Tennessee State Board of Education produces the Teacher Preparation Report Card annually for all programs in the state based on student growth, candidate profile, placement and retention rates, observation scores, and effectiveness. Memphis Teacher Residency received the highest ratings for preparation programs in Tennessee in 2016 based, in part, on graduate impact on student learning.

Moving Forward and Additional Resources

The residency model of teacher preparation incorporates a student-centered, data-driven, and capacity-building approach to improving preparation systems. Residencies give new teachers the strongest start possible. High need schools benefit from a long-term, sustainable pipeline of highly effective new teachers who positively impact student learning and school success. States can advance an agenda of improving student outcomes by building on the lessons learned from residencies to improve access to effective educators.

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MISSION

To launch and support a network of high-performing residency programs dedicated to preparing highly effective urban public school teachers that will transform educational practices nationwide.