



## Partnership for Public Education

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# PROMISE AND PROSPECTS FOR SCALING-UP TEACHER RESIDENCIES IN DELAWARE AS A RESPONSE TO STATEWIDE TEACHER SHORTAGES



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## What is the issue?

Since the Great Recession, enrollment in Delaware's educator preparation programs (EPPs) have declined significantly (see Table 1). That decline mirrors a national trend as enrollment across the United States fell 35% between 2010 and 2018. Meanwhile, the percentage of students completing EPPs also declined nationally by 27%. However, the decrease in Delaware during the same period was significantly greater than the national average with a nearly 60% decline in enrollment and 43% decline in program completion.<sup>i</sup> Notably, teacher turnover in Delaware was 3% higher than the national average for the same time period<sup>ii</sup> with attrition highest among teachers within their first five years of practice, ranging between 19% and 30%.<sup>iii</sup>

**Table 1**

Number of students enrolled in Delaware educator preparation programs by academic year.

	Academic Year							
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Traditional	3,037	3,418	2,735	1,974	1,809	1,761	1,227	1,297
Alternative, IHE-based	0	0	0	0	0	116	146	159
Alternative, not IHE-based	105	144	123	94	150	5	16	n.d.

Data obtained from: <https://title2.ed.gov/Public/Home.aspx>

Student achievement is undermined by high attrition as a function of shortcomings in teacher preparation, teacher inexperience, and overall instability of a school's instructional staff. Schools suffer from diminished collegial relationships, lack of institutional knowledge, and the expense of training new teachers who more than likely will not remain in their positions long term. Research shows that school stability, coupled with shared planning and collaboration, helps teachers improve their effectiveness. Additionally, teachers improve more rapidly in supportive and collegial working environments.<sup>iv</sup>

Student enrollment in PK-12 schools is expected to increase nationally by 3 million students (53 million total) in the next decade.<sup>v</sup> Increases in student enrollment, combined with rates of teacher attrition, indicate a need for programs and policies that mitigate attrition and support rapid and ongoing development of highly-qualified PK-12 teachers.

## What are teacher residencies?

Although there is no single definition or model for teacher residencies, there are general characteristics that set apart this mode of teacher preparation from traditional forms. Teacher residencies can occur as part of a four-year undergraduate program in education in which the residency period substitutes for traditional student teaching. On the other hand, teacher residencies can be part of a post-baccalaureate program of study that leads to initial certification. In all cases, teacher residencies are yearlong, paid internships in which teacher residents (i.e., teacher candidates) learn the craft of teaching alongside a master teacher (i.e., resident mentor), beginning with the first day of school and ending with the last. This model differs from traditional student teaching in which teacher candidates begin and end their student teaching experience based on the EPP's academic calendar and not that of the local education agency (LEA) in which the clinical placement occurs. Teacher residents typically receive structured coaching and feedback from their master teacher and EPP faculty at more frequent intervals than traditional student teaching. Eventually, the teacher resident assumes the role of lead teacher, similar to that of traditional student teaching. However, in long-established teacher residency programs in Boston, Chicago, Denver, and New York, teacher residents are typically admitted to EPP residency programs in cohorts that afford opportunities for teacher residents to learn from one another during the residency year. In addition, many teacher residency programs offer some or all coursework at residency sites, where learning to teach is most relevant, rather than on the EPP's campus. This arrangement requires a strong professional development school model in which LEAs and EPPs collaborate for the purpose of preparing future educators.

## Why teacher residencies?

The US Department of Education and the Delaware State Department of Education have prioritized teacher residencies through grant programs.<sup>vi</sup> These grant programs support EPPs in their efforts to develop and implement courses and programs that support teacher residents and provide financial support in exchange for commitment to teach in a high need school and/or subject area for a specified time period.

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It is unlikely that the number of new teachers produced by residency programs will completely resolve problems associated with teacher shortages. However, studies of teacher residency programs have found that teacher residents are more likely to remain in the profession at higher rates than their traditionally trained peers.<sup>vii</sup> Even a small reduction in attrition in the profession could ameliorate teacher shortages in Delaware and save local education agencies millions of dollars annually.<sup>viii</sup>

## How are teacher residencies different?

Teacher residency programs are modeled on other professional apprenticeship models such as medical residencies. These programs combine coursework in education with extensive classroom-based training prior to initial certification; EPPs and PK-12 districts act as equal partners in the preparation of teacher residents. The following characteristics are hallmarks of teacher residency programs.

- EPPs and PK-12 districts collaborate in operating the teacher residency program and the districts hiring priorities influence who is admitted to the program. Typically, candidates are chosen to participate in teacher residencies to fill positions in high needs schools and/or subject areas such as math, science, special education, and English language learning.
- Teacher residents complete university coursework while engaged in a yearlong internship that occurs in a PK-12 classroom. This internship begins and ends based on the PK-12 academic calendar not the calendar of the EPP program. Thus, teacher residents experience teaching from the first day teachers report to their classrooms until the day students are dismissed for the summer.

- Teacher residents co-teach alongside a master teacher who provides mentorship and support in learning to teach. By working in a master teacher’s classroom, a teacher resident can observe their mentor, start working with students early in their preparation, practice new skills in an actual classroom, and gradually engage in independent practice. This structure provides teacher residents with time to develop essential competencies needed to be effective, while reducing the steep learning curve inherent to independent teaching during a traditional first year.<sup>ix</sup>
- Residency programs offer financial support in exchange for a commitment to teach in the school or district for two to five years.<sup>x</sup> During their residency year, teacher residents can be paid a modest stipend to full starting salary and benefits, which range from \$12,000 to \$39,000. Tuition scholarships are frequent components of residency programs and help to offset total cost of initial certification. These financial supports hold the potential to expand the pool of candidates from lower income households where expenses pose considerable barriers to postsecondary enrollment.
- Induction programming during the first years of practice provides teacher residents with professional support beyond their residency year and are often co-facilitated by mentor teachers and EPP faculty.

## What does research tell us about teacher residencies?

Research points to three primary benefits of teacher residencies: higher retention of teachers in the field, greater demographic diversity among teachers prepared through residency programs, and the potential to increase student achievement. Teachers who are prepared through residencies remain in the profession in greater rates than those not prepared through residencies.<sup>xi</sup> For instance, teachers prepared in the Boston Teacher Residency were more likely than other similarly experienced teachers to continue teaching in the same district into their fifth year. Five-year district retention rates for teacher residents were significantly higher (75%) than for other teachers (51%). This finding is particularly important because it indicates that teacher residents remained in the district after they fulfilled their three-year teaching commitment.<sup>xii</sup> Similar findings emerged from a national sample of teacher residencies funded by the federal government: on average, 82% of teacher residents remained in their original district, whereas only 72% of other teachers remained. Additionally, when teacher residents left their original school, they were more likely than other teachers to take positions in high needs schools.<sup>xiii</sup>

Those enrolled in teacher residency programs tend to be more demographically diverse than those in traditional educator preparation programs.<sup>xiv</sup> Across teacher residency programs nationally, 45% of residents were teachers of color in 2015-2016, which is more than double the national average (19%) of teachers of color entering the profession.<sup>xv</sup> In its 2010-2011 cohort, the Denver Teacher Residency included 37% of residents who identified as ethnically diverse, whereas only 20% of the teacher population in Denver Public School were ethnically diverse.<sup>xvi</sup> Some residency programs have even higher proportions of residents who are teachers of color. For example, 66% of residency graduates are teachers of color, compared to 53% San Francisco Unified School District teachers as a whole.<sup>xvii</sup>

Some limited evidence points towards the effectiveness of teachers from residency programs in raising student achievement.<sup>xviii</sup> A value-added analysis of the Boston Teacher Residency indicated that achievement gains of students in English Language Arts and mathematics in teacher residents’ classrooms was comparable to those of traditional novice teachers, but the gains of students improved rapidly over time by teacher residents’ fourth or fifth year of teaching, even outperforming students of veteran teachers.<sup>xix</sup> A study of an urban teacher residency program in

New York City found that students in 73% of teacher residents’ classrooms outperformed students in other novice teachers’ classrooms on state standardized tests in science, mathematics, and English. A teacher residency in Memphis has also shown promise. A recent report on graduates of the Memphis Teacher Residency program showed higher achievement gains on the state standardized test among students in teacher residents’ classrooms than other beginning teachers and larger gains than veteran teachers on most performance indicators.<sup>xx</sup>

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## Where do we go from here?

Simply replacing traditional student teaching placements with yearlong residencies will not be enough. Although field-intensive preparation through teacher residencies could help bridge the longstanding theory-practice gap,<sup>xxi</sup> careful design and implementation is necessary to ensure that teacher residents acquire effective professional knowledge and skills. Below are some actions that can be taken to strengthen and/or expand teacher residencies in Delaware.

### ■ Strengthen partnerships between EPPs and PK-12 schools.

The design of teacher residencies as a practice-based model of teacher preparation requires a fundamental reconceptualization of how schools and EPPs, especially those housed within universities, collaborate to support teacher residents. Instead of simply being consumers of preservice teachers from EPPs, school districts should be equal partners in how future educators are trained and supported during early years of practice.<sup>xxii</sup> Such partnerships require clear, two-way communication between PK-12 administrators and EPP faculty about roles, values, and commitment to a common framework for effective teaching. EPP faculty can leverage residency partnerships to drive a research agenda that is focused on the mutual work of recruiting, preparing, developing, and retaining a high quality, diverse teacher workforce.

### ■ Collaboratively design and develop residency coursework and classroom practice to mutually support development of high-quality teaching and learning with EPP faculty and experienced school practitioners serving as co-teachers.

EPP faculty, who are normally located on college or university campuses, would spend significant amounts of instructional time in PK-12 schools where teacher residents are learning to teach. The co-location of EPP faculty would situate expertise proximal to sites where teachers are learning to teach and allow for EPP faculty to observe and then leverage teacher residents' experience during residency coursework. This co-location could be used to inform a responsive research agenda by EPP faculty that is focused on the day-to-day issues of teaching in residency schools.

Many teacher residency programs leverage new or existing professional development schools where teacher preparation can be centralized.<sup>xxiii</sup> On-site access provides EPP faculty with firsthand evidence of the practices being implemented, how those practices are implemented, and where teacher residents succeed and struggle.<sup>xxiv</sup> Many residency programs designate a site director to oversee the day-to-day operations of residency programming at a school.<sup>xxv</sup>

### ■ Carefully select and prepare a cadre of master teachers who serve as mentors for teacher residents during their residency and induction years.

Master teachers are chosen carefully based on prior evidence of teaching effectiveness and by recommendations of their school administrators. It is essential to provide these master teachers with ongoing support, including professional learning that focuses on effective mentorship, coaching, and research-based teaching strategies in their disciplines.<sup>xxvi</sup> Master teachers should be included in the recruitment and selection process of teacher resident candidates and compensated well for their professional services in mentoring teacher residents. This model differs from traditional student teaching in that master teachers are more carefully selected and mentored, not simply chosen from a larger pool of willing or available teachers in a building. Elevating the role of master teacher within residency programs is one way to offer experienced and talented teachers the possibilities for advancement without leaving the classroom.<sup>xxvii</sup>

### ■ Provide early induction supports, tailored to the needs of teacher residents, during the first years of classroom practice.

Viewing teacher residencies as teacher development and not just teacher preparation helps ensure that EPPs and PK-12 schools continue to work together beyond the residency year to support newly inducted teachers.<sup>xxviii</sup> Additional supports for ensuring the success of teacher residents include one-on-one coaching, classroom observation and feedback, and specialized professional learning seminars that are tailored towards the need of teacher residents and the goals of residency programs. Other residency programs have used a combination of state-mandated and postsecondary program supports to successfully retain teacher residents in classrooms.<sup>xxix</sup> In Delaware, this would involve changes to the type and duration of early induction supports provided by the state-mandated mentoring program.

Developing a collaborative EPP–state induction program for teacher residents and then studying its effects offer opportunities to strengthen mentorship programs offered to all novice teachers based on empirical evidence of effectiveness.

## ■ Focus on program evaluation and continuous improvement.

Based on the values and framework designed through collaboration between the EPP and district, teacher residents should undergo continuous, rigorous evaluation that is based on multiple measures, including: residents' performance on coursework, classroom observations, cycles of instructional planning and reflection, and student outcomes. Program level outcomes should focus on recruitment and retention of teacher residents both during and beyond their early induction years, especially on recruitment and retention of teachers of color and/or those who teach in high needs schools and/or content areas. In addition, master teachers should be evaluated by residency program staff to ensure the support they offer to their residents is sufficient for supporting professional growth. Overall, performance of teacher residency programs should encourage ongoing improvement using data to inform decision-making, with student achievement as the bottom line.

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