

# TEACHER RESIDENCY MODELS AS A FORM OF TEACHER PREPARATION



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## +++++ INTRODUCTION +++++

A common refrain among teachers of all backgrounds is that the training they received in their teacher preparation program inadequately prepared them for the realities of the classroom. This lack of meaningful preparation contributes significantly to the nationwide teacher retention problem, which impacts student achievement.<sup>1</sup> High-need school districts are especially susceptible to this problem, with significantly lower teacher retention rates in areas that have a higher proportion of students of color, English language learners, and students from low-income backgrounds.<sup>2</sup>

To help address this problem, in 2017 the Indiana General Assembly passed House Enrolled Act (HEA) 1449. The bill addressed many issues of educational reform but the most significant change is the creation and implementation of a pilot program for teacher residencies in the state of Indiana.<sup>3</sup> According to the National Center for Teacher Residencies (NCTR), teacher residency programs are “district-serving teacher education programs that pair a rigorous full-year classroom apprenticeship with masters-level education content.”<sup>4</sup> HEA 1449 allowed districts and preparation programs in Indiana to incorporate “significant teaching experience working alongside a highly-effective or effective teacher of record,” as well as the “instruction and mentoring of the prospective teacher by school corporation personnel or faculty of the teacher preparation program in the content area in which the prospective teacher will become certified or licensed.”<sup>5</sup> Indiana legislators now need to allocate funds to support the residency and mentor teacher pilot program in the 2019 Legislative Session.

As public school educators and Teach Plus Policy Fellows with wide-ranging experiences working across districts, charter schools, and innovation schools in Indianapolis, we have seen and felt the effects of teacher turnover and the importance of good preparation. In this report, we discuss the rationale for teacher residency programs, highlight key components of successful residency models, and put forth recommendations for residency program formation in Indiana.

## +++++++ BACKGROUND ++++++

In teacher residency programs based on medical residency models, pre-service teachers complete a year-long, in-school “residency” with demonstrably-effective mentor teachers in a high-need classroom. Residents receive a stipend and commit to teaching in their district for three or more years beyond the residency year, with consistent, focused support and additional coursework provided by the residency program.<sup>6</sup> These residency programs address many of the longstanding concerns teachers have when it comes to traditional teacher preparation programs and have been shown to help increase teacher retention nationwide.

One example of a successful residency program is the Boston Teacher Residency (BTR) program. According to a 2012 study, when BTR graduates were compared with graduates of other teacher preparatory programs hired in the district over the same seven-year time period, graduates of the BTR program were more likely to continue teaching into their 5th year after completion of the program.<sup>7</sup> Another well-established residency program is the Chicago-based Academy for Urban School Leadership (AUSL) program.<sup>8</sup> In urban areas like Chicago, teacher shortage and teacher retention, particularly in low-income schools, is a constant concern. According to the Illinois Education Research Council, 40 percent of Chicago public school teachers leave the profession within five years. Among graduates of the AUSL, the program was able to maintain a five-year retention rate of 91 percent.<sup>9</sup>

## +++++++ METHODOLOGY ++++++

In our research, we catalogued the most critical components of the residency model and examined successful residency programs nationwide. In conversations with multiple stakeholders across several different residency programs and models, five core components stood out as essential in creating an effective residency program. These components are:

1. Effective mentor teachers.
2. Residents placed based off district staffing needs.
3. A residency year spanning an entire school year with concurrent coursework.
4. Strategic hiring decisions based off school needs.
5. An induction/onboarding program after a resident leaves the program.

To understand how teachers feel about about these core components, we conducted three focus groups and collected the input of 19 teachers from across Indianapolis. Focus group participants were presented with examples of how the components were implemented in Chicago’s Academy for Urban School Leadership program and Marian University’s newly-launched Klipsch Educator’s College. We then asked the focus group participants to provide feedback on the appeal and implementation of the two example programs.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CRITICAL COMPONENTS OF A TEACHER RESIDENCY PROGRAM

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## RECOMMENDED COMPONENT #1: SELECT EFFECTIVE MENTOR TEACHERS.

**MENTOR TEACHERS ARE INTEGRAL TO A TEACHING CANDIDATE'S INTRODUCTION TO THE PROFESSION, THUS IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT RESIDENCY PROGRAMS, DISTRICTS, AND SCHOOLS SELECT EFFECTIVE OR HIGHLY-EFFECTIVE TEACHERS TO ACT AS MENTORS IN THEIR PROGRAMS.**

The National Center for Teacher Residencies (NCTR) emphasizes “that the degree of impact mentors have on pre-service teacher learning, efficacy, and effectiveness is dependent upon mentors’ capacity to teach and coach effectively.”<sup>10</sup> A highly-effective mentor helps develop teachers who are able to manage and instruct a diverse classroom of learners, while having a less-effective mentor results in ill-prepared teachers who can negatively impact student learning and can even steer new teachers away from the profession entirely. A sixth grade math teacher said, *“As a first year teacher, I felt incompetent daily—as I had little support and guidance for how to teach with rigor and manage a classroom.”* A seventh grade literacy teacher said, *“I think the loss of new teachers comes from the ‘sink or swim’ idea that most undergraduate scholars receive and this seems to bridge that gap.”*

Because the relationship mentors have with their resident teachers is so crucial to their success, the residency programs we studied are highly selective in choosing teachers to

serve as mentors. Mentors in the NCTR network programs are expected to perform in the top thirty percent of their school or district and achieve a year’s worth of growth (or more) for each student.<sup>11</sup> Not only does quality mentorship impact residents’ success, it also serves as a great retention tool for educators already in the field. Mentorship provides talented teachers with an opportunity to lead and develop as professionals while maintaining their critical role in the classroom. These career pathways are high indicators of career satisfaction and retention of veteran teachers who most positively affect student outcomes.

Some programs offer incentives for teachers to become residency program mentors. At Klipsch Educators College at Marian University for example, mentor teachers receive professional development on co-teaching and coaching, their tuition for coursework through Marian is reimbursed.<sup>12</sup> More generally, residency programs provide a stipend for mentor teachers to incentivize their participation. An eleventh grade English teacher said, *“Having an experienced, qualified master teacher to guide a new teacher through the first year of their teaching is invaluable. Being able to tap into their wealth of information, strategies, and classroom management approaches would greatly ease the stress and isolation new teachers often feel in their first year out of school.”*

## RECOMMENDED COMPONENT #2: ADDRESS DISTRICT NEED.

**TEACHER RETENTION STARTS THE FIRST DAY TEACHERS ENTER THEIR PLACEMENT SCHOOLS. MATCHING RESIDENT TEACHERS WITH DISTRICTS AND SCHOOLS WHERE THEY WILL THRIVE WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE PROGRAM IS A FUNDAMENTAL PART OF AN EFFECTIVE RESIDENCY MODEL.**

When considering student teaching placements, many traditional teacher preparation programs have no choice but to place teacher candidates in the school districts surrounding their college campuses. Often these districts do not mirror the demographics of the schools in which the prospective teachers will eventually teach. Teaching candidates' experience is also often lacking due to the limited connection between school districts (particularly high-need districts) and teacher preparation programs. Furthermore, alternative preparation programs may place teacher candidates in high-need districts but do not provide the pre-service time commitment and continued mentorship of a residency program.

Residency programs, on the other hand, recruit based on district needs, choosing teacher candidates who will be most successful in districts where there is a teacher shortage or high turnover.<sup>13</sup> Over a six-year period from 2007-2013, the AUSL residency program in Chicago trained and placed 250 teachers in eight Chicago Public Schools. In its first year, AUSL saw a seven percent increase in test scores in the turnaround elementary school.<sup>14</sup> A 2018 Joyce Foundation report cited AUSL as one of the catalysts behind the district's significant increase in educational outcomes for students.<sup>15</sup> Since taking over the management of its first school in 2006, AUSL now manages 31 schools on Chicago's south and west sides and has become integral in the district's transformation.<sup>16</sup>

This phenomenon is not an isolated case and has been proven in various programs across the country. The 2012 BTR study showed that with the BTR program effectiveness rates increased over time. In their first year, BTR math teachers were statistically less effective than other first-year teachers, but by the fifth year the BTR teachers were statistically more effective than their non-BTR teacher counterparts.<sup>17</sup>

## RECOMMENDED COMPONENT #3: ENSURE A FULL YEAR OF CLASSROOM EXPERIENCES AND COURSEWORK.

**ONE OF THE CORE COMPONENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE RESIDENCY PROGRAM IS THE FULL YEAR OF CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE AND CONCURRENT COURSEWORK RESIDENTS RECEIVE PRIOR TO ENTERING THE CLASSROOM AS A FULL-TIME TEACHER.**

An example of an alternate teacher preparation program in Indianapolis operating

under this year-long model is IndyTeach, Christel House Academy's in-house apprenticeship program where teachers work alongside a mentor teacher and take courses for a full year.<sup>18</sup> During the year, teachers undergo three key stages of development. The first stage focuses on acclimating the apprentice teacher to the classroom, building relationships, and supporting students. In the second stage, the apprentice teacher starts



to take on more responsibility in planning and co-instruction with their mentor teacher. This allows them to build confidence to take full responsibility for teaching and receive formal feedback in stage three. When students complete the program and pass certification exams, apprentices qualify for an Indiana instructional license.<sup>19</sup>

Marian University offers a similar experience. Their program is “a four-year intensive coursework and clinical field experience” before the full-year residency begins. Their fifth year residency is not only tuition-free for the student, but it pays a \$10,000 stipend throughout the course of the residency year. By the end of the residency year, Marian students will have earned both a Bachelors and Masters degree. This full-year residency

then allows students to work with a mentor teacher for a full year in a more authentic classroom experience unlike the artificial and usually too-short student teaching programs.<sup>20</sup>

Increased time in the actual classroom leads to better preparedness among residents and an increased level of comfort among principals when hiring a new teacher. Ninety-seven percent of BTR teachers say they felt prepared for teaching in urban schools.<sup>21</sup> BTR graduates ranked highly with principals as well, with 96 percent of principals saying that they would recommend a BTR graduate to be hired by a colleague. They also rate 85 percent of graduates as similarly or better prepared than their non-BTR counterparts.<sup>22</sup>

## RECOMMENDED COMPONENT #4: HIRE STRATEGICALLY

**ENSURING NEW TEACHERS HAVE JOB OPPORTUNITIES UPON COMPLETING THEIR TRAINING IS A LARGE PART OF TEACHER PREPARATION. EFFECTIVE RESIDENCY PROGRAMS CONSIDER THE NEEDS OF THE DISTRICTS AND SCHOOLS THEY PARTNER WITH AND WORK TO FILL THE ANTICIPATED GAPS THROUGH STRATEGIC HIRING.**

A teacher preparation program that is able to form mutually-beneficial partnerships to place residents in high-need districts and content areas is incredibly important to increase outcomes for students in those areas. According to NCTR, their graduates commit to serving their district for at least three years after the completion of their residency. After those three years, the program and the district see an increase in retention and improvement for students.<sup>23</sup>

In recent years, Indianapolis has put more focus on strategic hiring and teacher retention with the creation of such initiatives as Teach Indy, a partnership among Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS), the Office of Education Innovation, and The Mind Trust.<sup>24</sup> The initiative is aimed at strengthening the teacher talent pipeline by recruiting educators throughout the state and country to teach in public schools within the city's urban center where there is the highest need. By highlighting existing residency models alongside best practices and opportunities to create programs across Indiana, the city and state can help to attract residents to specific schools to improve education outcomes in the city and increasingly fill gaps in districts and networks.<sup>25</sup>

**RECOMMENDED COMPONENT #5: INTEGRATE A ROBUST INDUCTION/ONBOARDING PROGRAM**

**A CHALLENGE OF ANY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IS ON-THE-JOB TRAINING.<sup>26</sup> THIS CAN BE ESPECIALLY TRUE IN SCHOOLS WHERE THE PREPARATION PROGRAM DOESN'T ALWAYS LOOK LIKE THE SCHOOLS WHERE TEACHERS WILL EVENTUALLY WORK. EXACERBATING THIS CHALLENGE, INDIANA, UNLIKE OTHER STATES, DOES NOT REQUIRE SCHOOLS TO HAVE A FORMAL INDUCTION PROGRAM.<sup>27</sup> WE RECOMMEND AS THE LAST CORE COMPONENT OF AN EFFECTIVE RESIDENCY PROGRAM A MINIMUM ONE-YEAR INDUCTION PROGRAM FOR RESIDENT TEACHERS.**

Induction programs should take place in the first or second year of teaching after residencies and offer support for new teachers within the context of their schools and/or districts.

With the university taking responsibility for inducting new teachers to the profession, it allows for continuity during the first year(s) of teaching. A great local example is Marian University. Their residency program offers two years of induction.<sup>28</sup> "If one of our graduates shows the need for growth in a particular skill or competency, then we will be there to offer coaching and professional development."<sup>29</sup> This individualized support gives new teachers specific feedback and can be the difference between a teacher exiting the profession in frustration and making a career focused on making a positive difference in students' lives.

+++++ **CONCLUSION** +++++

As Indiana continues to grapple with education reform, teacher residency programs should be seriously considered as a tool to better the education of Indiana students. Indiana lawmakers should consider continued funding for residency programs as well as bringing teachers to the table on how teacher preparatory programs can better serve new teachers. As has been shown in other states, Indiana should consider integrating the following successful components of residency programs into their local models: effective mentor teachers; consideration for district need; a year-long classroom experience; a strategic hiring process; and a robust onboarding program for new educators. With effective residency programs active in our state, both students and teachers are bound to benefit.

## +++++ ENDNOTES +++++

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<sup>4</sup> The Residency Model: School-Based Teacher Preparation. (n.d.). Retrieved February, 2018, from <https://nctresidencies.org/about/residency-model-teacher-mentor-programs/>

<sup>5</sup> See endnote 3

<sup>6</sup> See endnote 4

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<sup>9</sup> See endnote 8

<sup>10</sup> See endnote 4

<sup>11</sup> National Center for Teacher Residencies. (2014, November). Research Report: Building Effective Teacher Residencies. Retrieved February, 2018, from <https://nctresidencies.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/NCTR-BETR-v2-Final.pdf>

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<sup>14</sup> See endnote 8

<sup>15</sup> Kelleher, M. (2018, January). Progress and Promise: Chicago's Nation-leading Educational Gains. Retrieved March, 2018, from <http://auslchicago.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Progress-and-Promise-Chicagos-Nation-Leading-Educational-Gains.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Academy for Urban School Leadership. (n.d.). AUSL - Our History – AUSL - Academy for Urban School Leadership. Retrieved March, 2018, from <http://auslchicago.org/about/ausl-our-history/>

<sup>17</sup> See endnote 7



<sup>18</sup> Home. (n.d.). Retrieved March, 2018, from <https://www.indyteach.org/>

<sup>19</sup> See endnote 18

<sup>20</sup> See endnote 12

<sup>21</sup> See endnote 13

<sup>22</sup> See endnote 13

<sup>23</sup> National Center for Teacher Residencies (Ed.). (2015, June). Research Report: Clinically Oriented Teacher Preparation. Retrieved February, 2018, from <https://nctresidencies.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/NCTR-COTP-Final-Single-Pgs.pdf>

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<sup>29</sup> See endnote 12