

TEACHSTRONG POLICY PROPOSAL: PRINCIPLE 5

PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR NEW TEACHERS

Provide support for new teachers through
residency and induction programs

#TEACHSTRONG

THE NINE TEACHSTRONG PRINCIPLES

PRINCIPLE 1

IDENTIFY AND RECRUIT MORE TEACHER CANDIDATES

PRINCIPLE 2

REIMAGINE TEACHER PREPARATION

PRINCIPLE 3

RAISE THE BAR FOR LICENSURE

PRINCIPLE 4

INCREASE COMPENSATION

PRINCIPLE 5

**PROVIDE SUPPORT
FOR NEW TEACHERS**

PRINCIPLE 6

**ENSURE TENURE IS A MEANINGFUL SIGNAL
OF PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENT**

PRINCIPLE 7

**PROVIDE TEACHERS WITH MORE TIME, TOOLS,
AND SUPPORT**

PRINCIPLE 8

**DESIGN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING TO BETTER
ADDRESS TEACHER AND STUDENT NEEDS**

PRINCIPLE 9

CREATE CAREER PATHWAYS

THE TEACHSTRONG THEORY OF CHANGE

The TeachStrong coalition has adopted nine principles we believe must be put in practice in order to modernize and elevate the teaching profession. This policy proposal from the TeachStrong coalition explains how we can provide support for new teachers through residency and induction programs. This proposal builds out Principle Five, the fifth of the nine TeachStrong principles. Although this proposal addresses just one principle, the nine principles affect and build upon one another and must be aligned to achieve systemic changes to the teaching profession.

Thoughtful changes across the teaching career continuum are necessary to improve teaching and learning for all students—especially students of color and those from low-income families. While higher expectations for students and schools have heightened the demands placed on teachers, the systems that are designed to support teachers have not kept pace. These gaps are especially apparent in high-need schools.

This campaign seeks to promote changes that span a teacher’s career, starting with recruitment and preparation and continuing on through compensation and career pathways, paying particular attention to the importance of the professional context in which teachers work. The TeachStrong coalition believes that all aspects of the teaching profession must be addressed in a systemic way; only then can we create a self-reinforcing cycle through which the status of the profession is raised along with the quality of teaching and learning in our nation’s classrooms.

We need a comprehensive approach to addressing the teacher pipeline because we have seen that piecemeal policy changes do not work. In the past, there have been attempts to address singular aspects of the teacher pipeline, and while these efforts may have made significant changes to one area, the system as a whole remained largely unchanged. For example, if we were to focus solely on preparation programs, it might give beginning teachers a stronger start. But student learning will not significantly improve if teacher training and development are ineffective or if teachers do not have opportunities to lead. In combination, however, changes in these areas could have powerful, lasting effects. Moreover, if we are to ensure that great teaching consistently reaches all students, we must explicitly address inequities in access to our strongest educators for low-income students and students of color.

No one simple policy fix will be enough to move the system as a whole. Many of the institutions responsible for educating, training, and setting policy for teachers operate in isolated silos that are sometimes disconnected from teachers themselves. The work is not easy: Policymakers must strive for a comprehensive system while factoring in other realities, such as existing political landscapes and the unique situations and contexts of individual states. However, as demonstrated by the consensus achieved by the diverse TeachStrong coalition around these nine principles, success is possible.

To achieve the kinds of dramatic changes we need for student achievement—and for those changes to be sustainable for teachers, students, and taxpayers alike—we need dramatic changes to all aspects of the systems designed to support teachers.

TEACHSTRONG POLICY PROPOSAL: PRINCIPLE 5

Provide support for new teachers through residency and induction programs

“We must do away with a common rite of passage, whereby newly minted teachers are tossed the keys to their classrooms, expected to figure things out, and left to see if they (and their students) sink or swim.”¹

– **RANDI WEINGARTEN**, President of the American Federation of Teachers

RESIDENCY AND INDUCTION PROGRAMS ARE CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF OTHER WELL-RESPECTED PROFESSIONS, SUCH AS MEDICINE

In medicine, clinical experience provides new practitioners with the opportunity to gradually earn increased autonomy and responsibility. New doctors are not immediately handed the scalpel; instead, they are first given simple tasks and the opportunity to learn from veteran doctors. Then, once they have demonstrated mastery of their specialty’s skills and content, new doctors are granted increased authority within the profession.²

Most successful businesses would not hire entry-level college graduates for the most challenging positions, only to fail to provide them with time to collaborate with colleagues and learn new skills. But that is exactly the approach with many new teachers, who must undergo a dramatically steep learning curve, often isolated from other, more experienced teachers.³ Every fall, thousands of new teachers across the country are handed the keys to a classroom, often with little more than a roster and a “good luck.”

Like medicine, teaching is a profession rooted in clinical practice. Teachers need time in the classroom to develop their skills as practitioners. In order to develop these essential competencies, teachers should undergo the same kinds of clinical experiences and the same gradual increase of responsibility as new doctors. Teachers should have the opportunity to observe accomplished mentor and veteran teachers with track records of success, start work with students early in their preparation, practice new skills in classroom settings, and gradually engage in independent practice.

“Teachers who have already spent time in a residency program will understand how learning operates from day one. This means that students would no longer be the guinea pigs of teachers’ learning curves; rather, they would benefit greatly from having already well-trained teachers.”

– SUJATA BHATT, Founder of the Incubator School and TeachStrong ambassador, Los Angeles, California

Though surveys of teachers show that educators benefit from clinical experiences, this kind of support and training is not consistently provided to prospective or new teachers.⁴ According to a survey of national and state teachers of the year, educators considered access to a high-quality clinical practicum the most important support at the pre-service stage.⁵ Teachers viewed access to strong cooperating (or mentor) teachers, particularly in terms of the cooperating teacher’s effectiveness at promoting student learning and providing adult mentorship, as the most critical component of this clinical experience.⁶ Similarly, new teachers want and benefit from consistent opportunities to work with mentors during their early years in the classroom.⁷

Residency and induction programs can give teachers more extensive clinical training and instructional support prior to and during their first years in the profession. These programs allow new teachers the chance to build and practice skills gradually rather than via a sink-or-swim approach. Through residency and induction programs, prospective and new teachers have the opportunity to learn and grow for a more extended period than is currently the norm.

THE COMPONENTS OF HIGH-QUALITY RESIDENCY AND INDUCTION PROGRAMS

Though residency and induction programs support new teachers in different aspects of career entry, both are intended to provide teachers with more extensive support while they learn essential teaching skills. Together, they ensure that new teachers develop clinical skills more rapidly and provide opportunities for prospective or new teachers to receive professional development and coaching from effective and experienced teacher colleagues, including through co-teaching models. The Network for Excellence in Teaching defines a high-quality clinical preparation program as one that includes a scaffolded approach, a continuum of experiences, integration between coursework and theory, faculty observation and feedback, and classroom teacher involvement and feedback.⁸

New Teacher Center describes strong induction programs as those that include instructional mentoring for new teachers by carefully selected, well-prepared mentors; formative assessment for teachers and support systems to drive continuous improvement; professional learning communities for mentors and new teachers; engaged principals; and supportive school environments and district policies.⁹ Research suggests that regular contact between beginning teachers and mentors over a period of at least two years can propel improved teaching and greater student learning.¹⁰

The National Center for Teacher Residencies defines a teaching residency as a program that measures and monitors a teacher candidate's knowledge and skills prior to entering the classroom as lead teacher. These programs provide resident teachers with deep, guided practice opportunities over the course of a year. During multiple observations, teacher candidates in these programs have the opportunity to develop and demonstrate their skills and ability to drive student learning, build relationships with students and colleagues, and manage classroom behavior in real school environments.¹¹ Research suggests that the selection and preparation of mentor teachers is an especially important component of successful clinical residencies.¹²

Some teacher residencies occur as the culmination of a full, rigorous preparation program, while others may serve teachers after they graduate and are hired at a participating school. There are myriad pathways into teaching, and there is not one solution to ensure that all teachers receive effective clinical preparation and support during their preparation and first years in the classroom. Some alternative programs span pre-service and in-service and incorporate and combine many elements of high-quality residency and induction programs. Some offer extensive pre-service clinical preparation paired with more modest in-service clinical support, whereas others offer more accelerated pre-service clinical preparation paired with more robust in-service support. Meanwhile, many traditional teacher preparation programs already provide their students with substantial opportunities to gain clinical experience before leading classrooms of their own.

No matter the type of program, teachers should receive extensive and effective clinical preparation and guidance in order to better serve their students. Residency and induction programs provide prospective and new teachers with critical training and support prior to and during their early years in the classroom, ultimately improving the experiences of teachers and students alike.

RESIDENCY AND INDUCTION PROGRAMS CAN MODERNIZE AND ELEVATE THE TEACHING PROFESSION

The first year of teaching is often a blur of lessons learned in the hot seat while students fail to learn all that they could.¹³ Nearly 1 in 7 new teachers leave the classroom before completing their third year, with most citing classroom management, the burden of curriculum freedom, and unsupportive school environments as their greatest challenges.¹⁴ According to the National Center for Education Statistics, teachers with three or fewer years of teaching experience are less likely than more experienced teachers to report being very well-prepared to maintain order and discipline in the classroom.¹⁵ Additionally, new teachers were less likely than more experienced teachers to report being well-prepared to implement state or district curricula.¹⁶ Residency and induction programs can provide essential practical training in classroom management, assessment and data literacy, and differentiation or special education techniques.¹⁷

Teacher residencies can support an aspiring professional in solidifying the linkages between theory and practice so that the resident's first years of teaching consist of learning and improvement rather than a focus on survival. Induction programs have a powerful role to play in deepening the competence, commitment, and efficacy of early career professionals in the classroom. Both residency and induction programs elevate the teaching profession by acknowledging that it is a profession that develops with clinical training over time with ample supports. Residency and induction

programs can limit frustrations and in turn improve the retention of new and veteran teachers. Allowing prospective and new teachers to learn and practice skills in supportive programs with mentor teacher guidance will improve the first-year teaching experience and reduce the likelihood that teachers will leave the classroom before the end of their first year, as 10 percent currently do.¹⁸

Well-designed residencies and induction programs can improve prospective and new teachers' access to qualified supports, provide supplemental services that facilitate their learning, develop teacher leadership pathways that support school improvement, and establish strong professional development opportunities for all teachers within a school that hosts new and resident teachers.¹⁹ By supporting accomplished teachers as they serve as mentors, we give these educators the opportunity to grow professionally and assume leadership roles within their schools. These opportunities can help educators improve their effectiveness in the classroom. Research suggests that as educators become more accomplished teacher leaders, they improve their leadership skills, as well as their organizational and instructional practices.²⁰

Residency and induction programs can also improve current professional learning by better addressing student and teacher needs from the beginning of teachers' careers. Teacher preparation programs and school districts across the country can collaborate to ensure that all teacher candidates receive ample clinical preparation with skilled mentor teachers. Through residency and induction programs, school leaders can provide new teachers with opportunities to learn from accomplished veterans, cultivating school cultures dedicated to collaboration and professional learning. Though all students would gain from having teachers who have experienced these kinds of skill-building opportunities, low-income students would particularly benefit from more practiced teachers. Students of color and low-income students are more likely to be taught by new teachers, so improving the skills of beginning teachers will improve the instruction happening in low-income schools.²¹ Implementation of year-long, funded co-teaching residencies can double the teaching support available to students in host schools.²²

Moreover, residency and induction programs can serve as valuable recruitment strategies. A structured, supported entry into teaching can change the narrative that new teachers are pushed into the deep end with little support. Instead, the perception would be that teaching is a challenging career that requires an extended training period with corresponding supports. In this scenario, young people and midcareer professionals might find teaching a more appealing career option, spurring greater interest in the profession. What's more, residency and induction programs can help schools and school districts recruit and retain a diverse teacher workforce. Various case studies have pointed to the detrimental effects that "isolation and lack of administrative support or professional community" can have on teachers, particularly educators of color.²³

Ultimately, all students would benefit from learning from teachers who receive ample guidance and support through residency and induction programs. If teachers could observe and practice their skills under the guidance of a skilled mentor teacher, teaching could become a more attractive and sustainable profession for prospective and new teachers alike.

“My residency program absolutely improved my instruction and increased my self-awareness of how I was as a teacher, a colleague, a mentor, a peer, and a leader in my work as an educator.”

– **MELANI BUCHANAN FARMER**, Instructional leader and TeachStrong ambassador, Albuquerque, New Mexico

EXISTING HIGH-QUALITY RESIDENCY AND INDUCTION PROGRAMS ACROSS THE UNITED STATES

Residency and induction programs are allowable uses of federal funds under Title II of the Every Student Succeeds Act.²⁴ Title I funds dedicated to school improvement may also be used for programs that better student outcomes, including teacher residencies. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Education’s Teacher Quality Partnership Grant Program provides funding to partnerships between institutes of higher education, teacher preparation programs, and high-need districts and schools to implement model teaching residency programs.²⁵ Moreover, states and local educational agencies can apportion funds to develop induction or mentoring programs that “improve classroom instruction and student learning and achievement” and “increase the retention of effective teachers.”²⁶ The following programs can serve as models for states, school districts, and schools that seek to prioritize residency and induction programs using federal, state, or district funds.

The Boston Teacher Residency is a one-year, full-time AmeriCorps program that combines a classroom apprenticeship, or student teaching experience, with master’s level coursework. Graduates are more racially diverse than other new teachers in Boston Public Schools; they are also more likely to teach in STEM fields and to remain teaching in the district through their fifth year, which is when data show that teachers tend to be at or close to their peak effectiveness.²⁷ Like the Boston Teacher Residency, the Relay Teaching Residency, founded in 2007 and supported by Relay Graduate School of Education, is a two-year program that provides residents with a structured, gradual on-ramp into the profession, along with a master’s degree.²⁸ Ninety-two percent of employing school leaders affirmed their satisfaction with the performance of their teachers who were enrolled at Relay.²⁹

In Colorado, the Public Education and Business Coalition is merging the Boettcher Teacher Residency, or BTR, and Stanley Teacher Prep, or STP, programs—together, the oldest and largest clinical residency experience in Colorado.³⁰ The programs work in 60 schools and 21 urban, rural, and suburban districts.³¹ The Public Education and Business Coalition’s high-quality, selective teacher residency pairs teacher interns with mentors—or Induction Support Teachers of Record—for a full year of clinical preparation in the gradual increase of responsibility model.³² The programs integrate theory and practice through learning labs, where exemplars of practice are dissected in rounds, similar to the medical model.³³ BTR and STP offer job-embedded and professional learning supports for their graduates for four years after completion, contributing to retention rates that are double the national average.³⁴ According to Sue Sava, the executive director of STP, “BTR and STP use a continuous improvement model by soliciting feedback from partner schools and districts so that they collaborate closely on district and school needs as they continuously redesign offerings for residents.”³⁵

Meanwhile, Trellis Education’s six-year program, which seeks to develop a new generation of exceptional secondary STEM teachers in California, provides each participating teacher with mentorship, a durable foundation rooted in core teaching practices, and a professional development trajectory.³⁶ This trajectory follows teachers from an apprenticeship year as pre-service teachers through their fifth year as full-time teachers, during which each teacher in turn mentors a “Year 0” pre-service teacher. The program, which includes a residency during the first and second years as a paid in-service teacher, gradually grants new teachers increasing responsibility—from 50 percent to 80 percent full-time teaching at the outset to full autonomy by the end of the two-year in-service induction period. By the end of the program, a Trellis teacher will have mentorship experience, a Master of Arts in Education or a Master of Science in a STEM field, and National Board Certification in a STEM field.³⁷ Along the way, the program also emphasizes extensive clinical practice to complement learning experiences, rigorous standards to select and prepare a strong field of STEM teachers, and the use of educational technologies to monitor and augment performance and development.³⁸

The National Center for Teacher Residencies, or NCTR, a nonprofit founded in 2007, works to develop, support, and promote teacher residencies around the country. First-year teachers in NCTR programs are more effective—based on student learning gains—than new teachers who did not participate in an NCTR residency, and an overwhelming majority of participating principals would “strongly agree” that they would prefer to hire a teacher who has experienced a clinical residency before entering their own classroom.³⁹ One example of an NCTR program is Memphis Teacher Residency, an urban teacher residency program that works in 31 partner schools within six low-income neighborhoods in Memphis, Tennessee.⁴⁰ Residents train with a skilled mentor, receive coaching, and earn both a Tennessee teaching license and a master’s degree in urban education over the course of a school year.⁴¹ With their mentor teacher, residents gradually assume increased responsibility in the classroom. Residents agree to teach in Memphis high-need schools for three additional years following their residency. The program provides housing and a living stipend to all resident teachers.⁴²

Similarly, New Teacher Center works with state departments of education, school districts, and other local educational agencies to design, develop, and implement successful and sustainable teacher induction programs.⁴³ The center’s programs support qualified, trained mentors; strong school leaders; positive school environments; and opportunities for professional learning for mentors and new teachers. Additionally, New Teacher Center advocates for multi-year induction programs that incorporate co-teaching models.⁴⁴ Teachers supported by New Teacher Center demonstrate higher proficiency in both engaging students and using assessment in instruction, while 90 percent of new teachers agree that working with their New Teacher Center mentor influences their practice and meets their needs as a growing professional.⁴⁵ Moreover, a preliminary independent Evaluation of Investing in Education, or i3 evaluation, showed that “after just one year, students of teachers supported by New Teacher Center gained 2 to 3.5 months of additional learning in reading compared to control teachers.”⁴⁶

Likewise, the Urban Teachers program provides new teachers with a multi-year support system, including a residency experience, clinical coursework, and one-on-one coaching. Founded in 2009, the program aims to supply high-need schools with effective and well-supported new teachers.⁴⁷ Participating teachers must pass a rigorous selection process, which includes submission of a transcript, resume, and essay, as well as a digital performance exercise and a full-day interview with performance-based tasks.⁴⁸ Fifty-one percent of Urban Teachers’ teachers are people of color.⁴⁹ Once selected, participating teachers receive intensive training, including 1,500 hours of clinical experience and three years of instructional coaching.⁵⁰ Urban Teachers’ thorough selection process and focus on their teachers’ residency and induction experiences likely contributes to the program’s success. During the 2014-15 school year, 95 percent of host teachers

“strongly agreed/agreed” that their resident teacher “positively impacted student learning.”⁵¹ Ninety-eight percent of resident teachers participating in the Urban Teachers program “strongly agreed/agreed” that “Urban Teachers’ training gave me the knowledge/skills needed to be an effective teacher.”⁵²

Though only four states require and provide funding for a multi-year teacher induction program, some states are also focusing on crafting residencies or induction programs to ensure new teachers’ success.⁵³ South Carolina’s System for Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Professional Teaching requires that before the beginning of the school year, all new teachers be assigned mentors for at least one year.⁵⁴ The mentors are selected and matched to mentees on the basis of effectiveness; knowledge of new teacher professional development and effective adult learning strategies; and similar experience, certifications, and grade level assignments. The state also requires that mentors and new teachers receive adequate time for classroom observations, collaboration, and planning.⁵⁵ Similarly, Connecticut, Delaware, and Iowa require schools and districts to provide multi-year support for new teachers, require teachers to complete an induction program for professional licensure, and provide dedicated funding for new teacher induction and mentoring.⁵⁶

These programs can serve as valuable models for the kinds of residency and induction programs that all prospective and new teachers should experience. States, national organizations, school districts, and teacher preparation programs should work together to expand these opportunities for more beginning teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

States and school districts should create high-quality residency and induction programs to ensure that all new teachers are set up for success.

Residency and induction programs provide new teachers with essential opportunities to practice new skills, learn from accomplished veteran teachers, and identify successful teaching strategies through guided teaching experiences.

Title II of the Every Student Succeeds Act allows state and local educational agencies to dedicate funds to developing residency and induction programs for new teachers and school leaders. According to the law, teacher residency programs must span at least one year. During this time, prospective teachers should teach alongside an “effective” teacher, as determined by each state; receive instruction in the “teaching of the content area in which the teacher will become certified”; and acquire “effective teaching skills,” as demonstrated through completion of a residency program.⁵⁷ Likewise, states and local educational agencies can dedicate funds to develop induction or mentoring programs that “improve classroom instruction and student learning and achievement” and “increase the retention of effective teachers.”⁵⁸

States and school districts should take advantage of Title II funds, Title I funds dedicated to school improvement, and Teacher Quality Partnership grants to create programs that allow new teachers to experience extended clinical preparation and support. States should incorporate language in their state plans about the fact that well-designed residencies and induction programs are strong, viable options for school improvement and teacher development under existing Every Student Succeeds Act funding streams. States should assist districts in implementing induction programs that are both high-quality and evidence-based.

States and school districts should ensure that residency and induction programs provide new teachers with a scaffolded training experience and gradual release of responsibility.

Based on existing research detailing the components of successful residency and induction programs, states and school districts should ensure that new teachers receive scaffolded training and the chance to spend substantial time learning from mentor teachers. Induction programs should include mentoring for novice teachers by educators with track records of success, as well as supportive school environments and principals. Likewise, residency programs should provide resident teachers with the opportunity to learn and receive feedback from master teachers and gradually assume increased responsibility within a real school environment. Residency programs should also provide individualized and differentiated support for novice teachers.

Because mentor teachers play an important role in ensuring that residency and induction programs are effective, mentors should have track records of success in the classroom; receive training on the disposition and skills necessary to guide new teachers to success; and receive additional compensation for their new role. Additionally, school leaders should implement school structures that support sufficient planning and collaboration time for novice and mentor teachers alike. The schedules of new teachers should be modified in order for them to collaborate with more experienced teachers during the workday. Otherwise, novice teachers can become overwhelmed, contributing to poor retention.

State and federal governments should use data on the performance of new and resident teachers, new teacher retention, and principal satisfaction with new and resident teachers to create and improve successful teacher residency and induction programs.

States should make these data available to participating school districts about their teacher residency and induction programs and create a feedback loop for improvement and investment in successful programs. These data can help teacher applicants determine which program will provide the most effective clinical preparation experience. When teachers are also participants in alternative teacher training programs that span pre-service and in-service, these programs and any other induction programs operated by the school system should be tightly coordinated in order to optimize effectiveness and reduce redundancy.

School districts and nonprofits or colleges of education should form partnerships to create successful residency and induction programs.

There are several models of high-quality residency and induction programs that school districts can implement in cooperation with partner groups, such as teacher preparation programs and other support agencies. Nonprofits or colleges of education and/or local teachers' associations can provide support and technical assistance for these programs. These partnerships can ensure that prospective and first-year teachers are receiving valuable pedagogical and content training, as appropriate, as part of their residency and induction programs.

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