Teacher Residencies in Texas

Supporting Successful Implementation

Steven K. Wojcikiewicz, Kimberlee Ralph, Jon Snyder,
Jennifer A. Bland, and Marjorie E. Wechsler

LEARNING POLICY INSTITUTE

DECEMBER 2025

Acknowledgments

The authors are indebted to the educator preparation program and PK–12 school faculty and administrators, teacher candidates, and preparation program alumni who contributed their time and shared their ideas and experiences with us; they made this report possible. We are also grateful to former Learning Policy Institute (LPI) intern Cordy McJunkins for his support in launching the study on which this report is based and to our LPI colleague Linda Darling-Hammond for her thoughtful feedback on earlier drafts of this report. Finally, we thank the members of the LPI Communications team for their skilled and unwavering support through the writing, design, production, and dissemination processes for this report.

Core operating support for LPI is provided by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Heising-Simons Foundation, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Raikes Foundation, Sandler Foundation, Skyline Foundation, and MacKenzie Scott. We are grateful to them for their generous support. The ideas voiced here are those of the authors and not those of our funders.

External Reviewers

This report benefited from the insights and expertise of two reviewers: Ryan Franklin, Managing Director for Policy and Advocacy at Philanthropy Advocates, and Brent Maddin, Executive Director and Professor of Practice at the Mary Lou Fulton College for Teaching and Learning Innovation at Arizona State University. We thank them for their time, effort, and care in providing their informed feedback.

Suggested citation: Wojcikiewicz, S. K., Ralph, K., Snyder, J., Bland, J. A., & Wechsler, M. E. (2025). *Teacher residencies in Texas: Supporting successful implementation*. Learning Policy Institute. https://doi.org/10.54300/630.675

This report can be found online at https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/texas-teacher-residencies-implementation.

Document last revised December 19, 2025

Table of Contents

List of Figures and Tables

Executive Summary

In 2021, the Texas Education Agency launched a large-scale, statewide effort to establish and sustain teacher residencies. The High-Quality, Sustainable Residencies Program was funded as part of the $1.4 billion Texas COVID Learning Acceleration Supports (TCLAS) initiative, underwritten by federal COVID-19 relief funds. From 2021 to 2024, this program provided funding for more than 85 residency programs, offered by school districts in partnership with state-designated educator preparation programs (EPPs), with paid placements for more than 2,000 residents. The grant also provided technical assistance for these districts to adopt "strategic staffing" models, reconfiguring educator positions to reallocate resources toward sustaining paid residencies after the end of grant funding.

Texas is one of a growing number of states responding to teacher attrition and shortages by incentivizing and expanding residencies. Teacher attrition rates in Texas have been 50% higher than the national average, while two thirds of Texas teachers newly hired in 2024 (not including rehires returning to the workforce) entered the profession either through alternative routes or, in a growing trend, without state certification. While such pathways can fill classroom vacancies quickly, research shows that they are associated with lower teacher retention and weaker student outcomes compared to clinically intensive pathways such as residencies.

Although the TCLAS residency program and its funding have ended, its effects on the Texas teacher workforce are still playing out. Policymakers and practitioners are looking to build on progress and address gaps, and this report is intended to inform future residency-focused efforts at both state and local levels by highlighting crucial levers of the TCLAS investment. These levers include the influence of TCLAS requirements and residency design elements in residency implementation, the essential contributions of resident stipends and program sustainability requirements, and the conditions that enabled uptake of the TCLAS residency model. Building on this analysis of program levers, the report explores the implications of TCLAS for ongoing residency development and builds on these to develop policy recommendations for Texas, though these are also applicable to other states with related teacher workforce goals.

Key Program Features for Residency Implementation

The TCLAS grant program required districts and EPPs to adopt research-based residency and partnership design elements. Residency features cited as effective by program administrators and residents included full-year resident placements in PreK–12 classrooms, resident stipends, experienced and trained mentor teachers, and co-teaching models with progressively increasing resident responsibilities. District–EPP partnerships were enacted through shared residency program governance processes, required by the grant, which promoted ownership, agency, and buy-in for EPPs and districts. These partnership features, and flexibility in TCLAS implementation, enabled program alignment to local priorities and needs. TCLAS grant requirements also laid out specific roles for the EPP clinical faculty (often known as site coordinators) and PreK–12 mentor teachers who were an essential part of the day-to-day operations of residency programs.

Residency Stipends and Sustainability

The two most important financial features of the TCLAS residency grant program were paid residency placements and technical assistance to help districts sustain funding for these paid placements. Stipends of $20,000, paid to residents by districts but funded by the TCLAS grant, were intended to cover residents' living expenses in order to enable their full participation in the residency model. Stipends facilitated residents' engagement in their clinical placements and concurrent EPP courses and requirements by allowing them to forego outside employment while they completed their residencies; current residents shared that they were only able to participate in the yearlong residency because of this stipend support.

TCLAS technical assistance, paid for by grant funding and supplied on an in-kind basis to districts, supported district adoption of strategic staffing models. Through these models, districts assign residents instructional support responsibilities, such as substitute teaching or tutoring. The money saved when residents fill these roles can then be reallocated toward resident stipends. Strategic staffing was the intended mechanism for sustaining paid residencies after the end of TCLAS funding. School administrators and district- and EPP-level staff were consistently pleased with the strategic staffing technical assistance they received. However, some TCLAS districts—especially smaller and more rural districts—found that the funding freed up by strategic staffing was insufficient to continue stipends at the $20,000 TCLAS level.

TCLAS technical assistance was also set up to contribute to paid residency sustainability by building statewide capacity to support TCLAS districts. Staff from US PREP, a Texas-based nonprofit center, provided direct technical assistance to districts while training regional Education Service Center (ESC) staff to do the same. Embedding expertise on strategic staffing in ESCs across the state not only supported TCLAS districts but also set up the infrastructure to support additional districts in establishing paid residencies post-TCLAS.

Enabling Conditions for TCLAS Uptake

Common among TCLAS districts and partner EPPs were two conditions that facilitated TCLAS implementation. First, the EPPs in the initial group of Vetted Teacher Residency programs, designated by the state as eligible to partner with TCLAS districts, were already running residency programs when the grant was launched. These EPPs had thus already worked through residency development and implementation, though several did add new features, including paid stipends, in order to participate in TCLAS. Second, TCLAS districts demonstrated high levels of engagement in residency implementation. They initially did so through the TCLAS application process, which gave districts the lead role in acquiring funding and launching partnerships. Later, according to administrators' reports, district educators' positive experiences hosting residents and hiring residency completers became motivating factors for sustaining TCLAS programs.

Policy Developments and Recommendations

We developed the recommendations in this report in the context of state administrative and legislative actions that were enacted concurrently with the TCLAS residency grant. As TCLAS was running, the Texas Education Agency launched three other residency grant programs. The first was a 2-year grant for non-TCLAS districts to receive technical assistance and staff funding for the establishment of teacher

residencies in partnership with vetted EPPs. The second funded training for regional Education Service Center staff to lead district technical assistance efforts beyond TCLAS. The final grant provided an additional year of funding for select TCLAS districts to sustain residency stipends while establishing their strategic staffing models. It was also during the run of the TCLAS program that the State Board for Educator Certification adopted changes to Texas administrative code, creating a recognized teacher residency preparation pathway and accompanying state teaching certificate.

Taking these developments into account, the TCLAS implementation findings in this report suggest a series of potential next steps for policymakers and practitioners.

1. **Continue to require key TCLAS features in future residency support efforts.** Essential features include research-based models with full-year placements in co-teaching settings; shared EPP–district governance structures enabling local flexibility, agency, and buy-in; and specified EPP and PreK–12 educator roles and responsibilities. In technical assistance, the dual emphasis on direct technical assistance and train-the-trainer roles for providers should be maintained, as should the collaborative, improvement-focused approach of the network of Education Service Centers already operating across geographic and institutional boundaries.

2. **Facilitate residency expansion by developing new EPP partners and supporting longer implementation timelines for new residency partnerships.** TCLAS grant program implementation relied on EPP experience and district uptake. The initial group of EPPs vetted for TCLAS participation drew on previous residency experience when implementing partnerships with districts. TCLAS districts benefited from these partnerships and, in some cases, from their own pre-TCLAS residency experience, but district engagement was also driven by PreK–12 educators' positive impressions of residents' performance during their training and as first-year teachers. Future state efforts to expand residencies should account for the time and effort required to establish residency infrastructure, partnerships, and buy-in, particularly in contexts in which EPPs and districts have less residency experience.

3. **Support the establishment of pipelines for mentor teachers and residency faculty as new programs come online and established programs continue to operate and grow.** Because both mentor teachers and EPP clinical faculty (site coordinators) were essential for TCLAS implementation, building intentionally designed pipelines for educators aspiring to these roles could support the scaling of residencies. Establishing these pipelines would likely involve districts and EPPs working in partnership, ideally with state guidance and coordination. Additionally, this work could be linked to ongoing efforts to establish and expand educator career ladders.

4. **Create multidistrict residency consortia to enable teacher pipeline collaboration, supported by expanded technical assistance through Education Service Centers.** Residency sustainability and scaling could be enhanced by creating cross-district collaboration structures, including regional residency consortia. In a region with multiple districts implementing residencies, a consortium could support local hiring for residency completers in an expanded geographic area. Specifically, a regional consortium could link smaller rural districts, with fewer teacher position openings each year, to larger districts with more residents and more yearly teacher vacancies. Creating regional flows of completers could expand hiring opportunities across districts and offer a new type of return on

investment for districts that train residents who move on to other locations, provided these residents stay within the region. Setting up regional consortia would require an expansion of connective structures across districts, but these could be built on collaborative TCLAS-supported technical assistance efforts already underway through Education Service Centers.

5. **Support residency sustainability by offering matching grants and helping districts braid funding from multiple sources.** TCLAS sustainability provisions, using district funds redirected through strategic staffing, were not always sufficient to maintain paid residencies at TCLAS levels. The state can support residency sustainability through a combination of approaches, including extending state funding of paid residency placements to give districts more time to achieve sustainability; offering matching grants to help subsidize district residency stipends; and providing guidance and technical assistance to support districts in braiding funding from multiple sources, including teacher apprenticeship funds.

6. **Provide targeted support for residency partnerships that prepare teachers for high-need assignments in rural and high-poverty districts.** Establishing and sustaining paid residencies in contexts in which economic and geographic barriers exacerbate shortages could be a powerful lever to support broader access to qualified teachers. Yet it is in these same contexts where strategic staffing approaches appear insufficient to sustain paid residencies. Targeting financial support for residency stipends and other administrative costs to districts designated by the Teacher Incentive Allotment would be a step toward addressing the teacher shortage in high-need areas. Targeted funds could also be directed toward additional time for districts to achieve residency sustainability.

Although these recommendations are focused on the Texas context, they can inform policy development in other states. Relevant lessons from Texas include requiring research-based residency features, ensuring sufficient timelines for the adoption of new preparation models, supporting EPP residency redesign as a precursor to establishing district partnerships, and providing technical assistance to districts to establish sustainable program and stipend funding.

Introduction

In 2021, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) undertook a program to establish and sustain teacher residencies across the state. The High-Quality, Sustainable Residencies Program, underwritten by federal COVID-19 relief funds, was one of 10 grant programs in the $1.4 billion Texas COVID Learning Acceleration Supports (TCLAS) initiative. Allotted just over $90 million, the TCLAS residency grant supported K–12 school districts offering residency programs in partnership with state-designated educator preparation programs (EPPs).[1] From 2021 through 2024, TCLAS provided funding and technical assistance to more than 85 district–EPP partnerships with paid placements for over 2,000 residents.[2]

This infusion of resources enabled a scaling-up of preexisting state efforts. Prior to 2021, the TEA launched a handful of local district–EPP partnerships with the collaboration of three regional Education Service Centers. The TCLAS residency grant created an opportunity to implement this residency model statewide, and on an accelerated timeline. Each TCLAS district–EPP partnership received 3 years of funding for paid residency placements along with technical assistance for the adoption of "strategic staffing" models. Strategic staffing, the reshuffling of educator positions to free up funding to support resident stipends, was built into the TCLAS grant to enable districts to sustain paid residencies after TCLAS funding ended.

This report describes the TCLAS grant program, highlights key levers of this statewide investment, and presents its implications for the ongoing development of teacher residencies along with recommendations to support this development. Though it is focused on TCLAS and the Texas state context, this report includes findings applicable to other states that may be seeking to support the establishment and expansion of high-quality residencies.

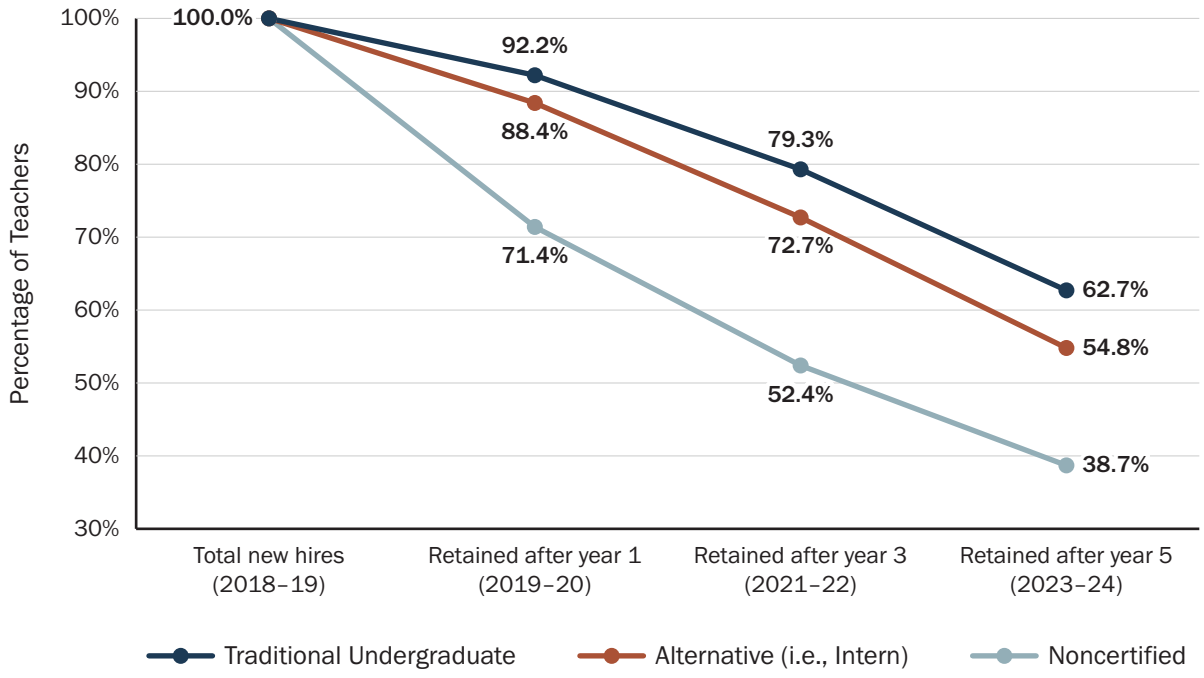
The Texas Teacher Workforce

Texas policymakers' focus on teacher residencies was a response to growing teacher workforce challenges. This workforce, the largest in the nation, numbered over 375,000 in 2024.[3] Assuming an attrition rate of 8%—the U.S. average, pre-COVID-19—Texas would need to hire 30,000 new teachers each year to maintain this workforce. Yet, Texas's actual teacher attrition rates have been consistently higher, staying above 10% every year but one in the last decade and spiking above 13% in 2022–23. These rates have left the state facing persistent shortages and high demand for new teachers.[4] During the 2023–24 school year, 45,231 teachers left their districts while 49,176 new teachers were hired, most replacing those exiting the profession.[5] The high attrition rates driving shortages are related to the large proportion of Texas teachers who enter the profession either through alternative certification routes or without state certification.[6]

Alternative Certification Pathways and the Workforce

Alternative pathways, in which new educators learn on the job with little or no preservice preparation, have been found to be associated with higher teacher attrition nationally.[7] These findings are reflected in Texas, where research has shown that educators coming through traditional certification pathways have been retained at higher rates, across a 5-year period, than those coming through alternative certification programs or without any certification (see Figure 1).[8]

Figure 1. Teacher Retention by Preparation Pathway



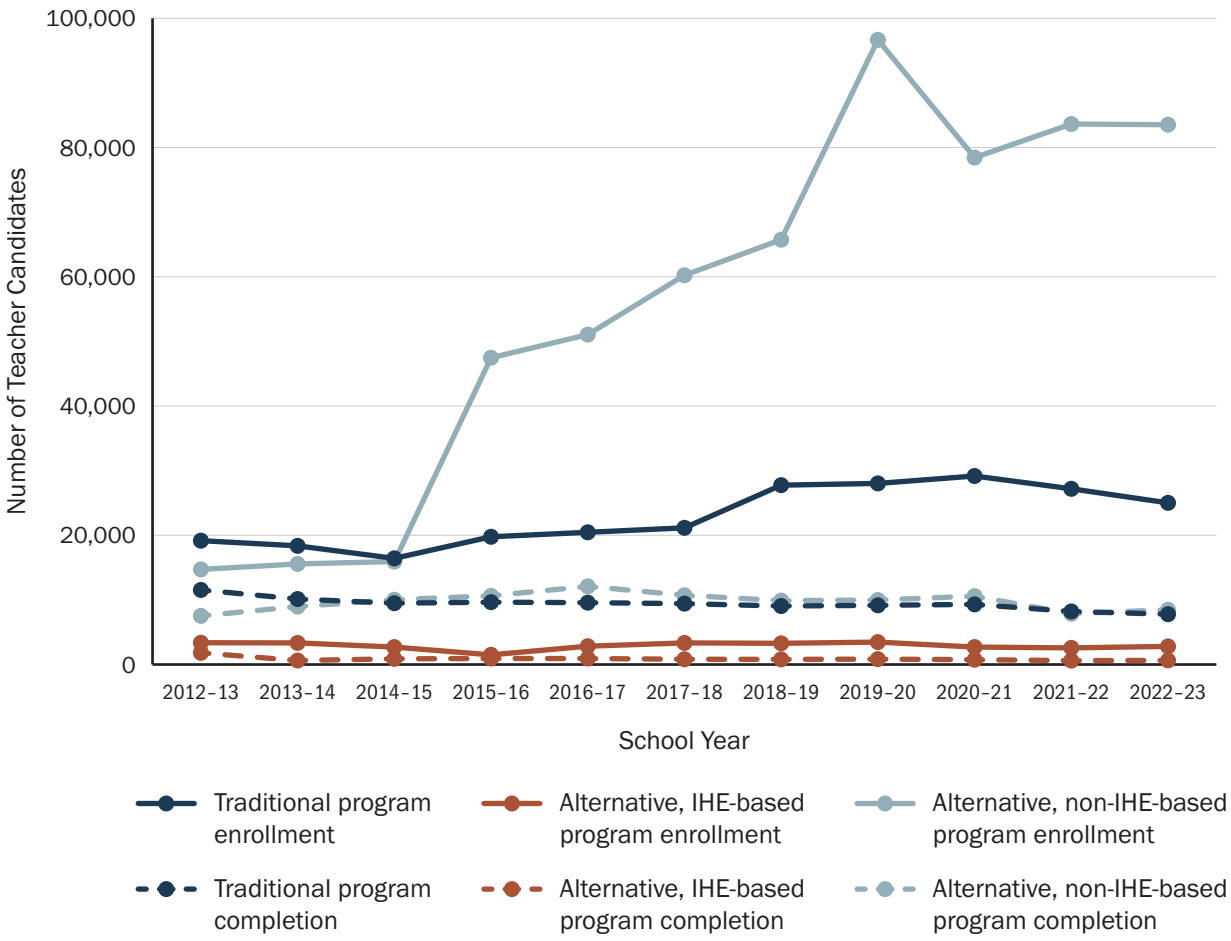
Note: This analysis reflects new-to-profession teachers only, excluding rehires returning to the workforce after being licensed in previous years.

Source: Landa, J. B. (2024, March). *Teacher retention by pathway to first year of teaching 2013–14 through 2022–23*. Texas Education Agency.

The connection between alternative certification and teacher attrition is of particular concern in Texas, where alternative certification pathways have grown as a proportion of the state's educator preparation sector since their legislative authorization in 2002. This authorization included for-profit programs that, by 2010, were preparing nearly as many teachers as the state's public universities. By 2015, they were preparing more.[9] In the four most recent years of available federal Title II data, enrollment in for-profit alternative certification pathways has accounted for over 70% of all EPP enrollment in Texas.[10]

This rise in alternative certification enrollment highlights another concern: The alternative certification sector in Texas has been characterized by gaps between program enrollment and completion numbers. Enrollment in alternative certification programs has risen rapidly, accounting for a nearly tripled overall EPP enrollment from 2012–13 to 2022–23, while traditional EPP enrollment was comparatively relatively flat. However, the rise in state EPP enrollment did not add up to a corresponding increase in the supply of new teachers due to low completion rates for alternative programs. In 2022–23, for example, nearly 85,000 candidates were enrolled in such programs but fewer than 8,500 completed them. Consequently, overall EPP completion fell by 19% during this period (see Figure 2). In contrast, traditional preservice EPPs, which saw much lower enrollment numbers over this same period, had annual completion rates as much as 3 times higher than alternative certification providers.

Figure 2. Texas Teacher Preparation Program Enrollment and Completion by Route, 2012–13 Through 2022–23



Notes: IHE = institution of higher education. Due to a reporting change in 2018–19, Title II published enrollment numbers from the academic years 2018–19 to 2022–23 included completers (prior years did not). To create a consistent enrollment measure over time (including completers), we updated the enrollment values for these earlier years by adding the reported completer numbers to the reported enrollment numbers.

Source: Learning Policy Institute analysis of data from U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.). *Title II reports: National teacher preparation data* for Texas for each academic year from 2012–13 to 2022–23 (accessed 07/29/2025).

The Expansion of Noncertified Pathways Into Teaching

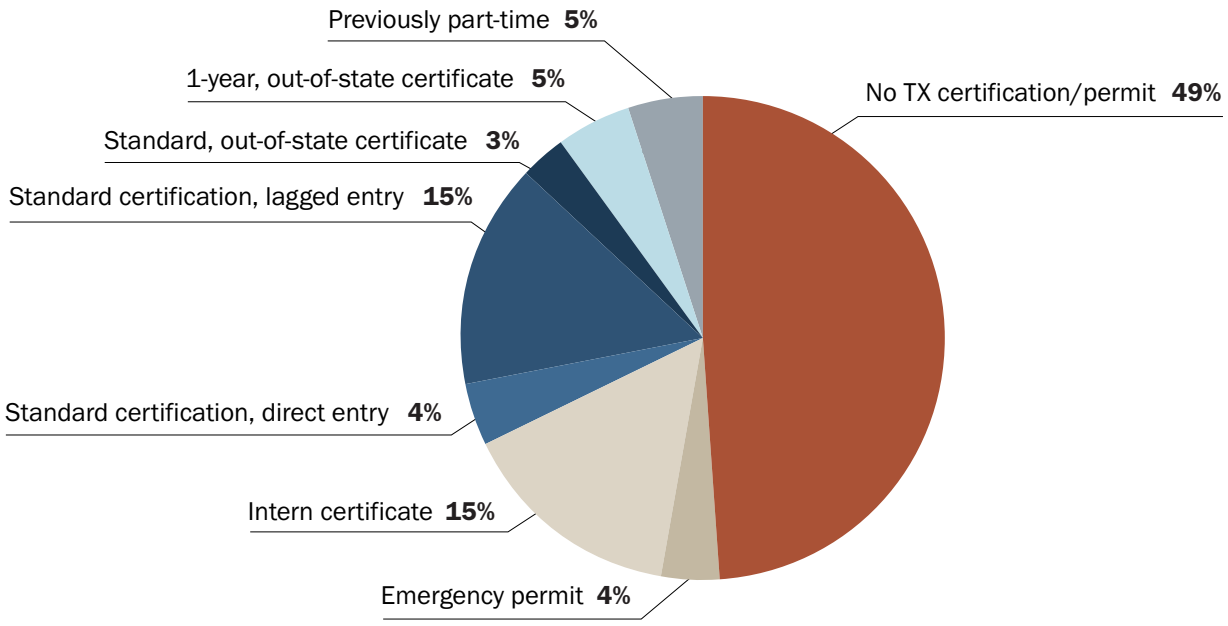
A state exemption for school districts designated as "districts of innovation" created a new pathway into teaching in 2015, allowing these districts to hire teachers who did not possess any type of state teaching certificate, not even an intern or emergency certificate. A large and growing number of districts have since been making use of this option. By 2024, the vast majority of Texas districts—nearly 80%—were designated as districts of innovation, able to hire noncertified teachers.[11] In the 2022–23 school year, over 80% of new hires in some rural counties were noncertified.[12] The next year, noncertified teachers hired by districts of innovation made up half of all newly hired teachers in the state.[13]

Like alternative certification pathways, noncertified routes into teaching are associated with higher teacher attrition. As Figure 1 shows, noncertified teachers in Texas suffered the sharpest drop in retention, compared with traditionally or alternatively certified teachers over the 5-year time span from 2019 to 2024. Fewer than 40% of noncertified entrants were still in teaching at the end of the same period, a figure 18 percentage points lower than the retention rate for alternative certification programs.

The Cumulative Effects of Alternative and Noncertified Pathways

The growth in alternative and noncertified pathways has reshaped the teacher workforce in Texas. Altogether, newly hired teachers who were underqualified (including those teaching under intern certificates and emergency permits) or noncertified made up 68% of all newly hired teachers statewide in 2023–24 (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. 2023–24 Statewide New Hires by Pathway Into the Teaching Profession



Note: This analysis reflects new-to-profession teachers only, excluding rehires returning to the workforce after being licensed in previous years.

Source: Learning Policy Institute analysis of Texas Education Agency. (2024, March). *The pathway of an employed new hire, 2014–15 through 2023–24*.

This trend appears related to the state's teacher attrition and shortages. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) estimated that if alternative and noncertified pathways had the same retention rates as traditional pathways, Texas would have had to hire almost 11,000 fewer teachers over the 5-year span from 2018–19 to 2023–24.[14] Even this number may underestimate differences in retention rates across pathways: The state only tracks alternative certification teachers' retention after they have been certified, meaning those who leave teaching while enrolled in their preparation programs, during the period when they are learning on the job in classrooms, do not count toward this total.[15]

Taken together, these figures indicate that, far from addressing teacher attrition and shortages, the proliferation of alternative and noncertification pathways has created a revolving door for the teacher workforce. While accelerated or no preparation for teaching allows classroom vacancies to be filled quickly, lower retention rates for teachers coming through these pathways mean that such efforts may actually serve to exacerbate, rather than solve, teacher shortages.

The Focus on Residencies

At the same time that alternative and noncertification pathways were supplying increasing numbers of teachers in Texas, state policymakers began to focus their efforts on promoting a fundamentally different educator preparation model: teacher residencies. Teacher residencies have a strong focus on clinical preparation, requiring preservice placements that exceed those of most traditional programs in length and intensity. Modeled after medical residencies, teacher residencies are built around yearlong candidate clinical placements. Each resident is placed with, and learns under the guidance of, an experienced mentor teacher (also referred to as a host teacher in Texas regulations). Residents also take practice-based EPP coursework concurrent with, and aligned to, this clinical experience. In contrast to alternative and intern-type programs, residents are not teachers of record during their clinical placements.

These key characteristics—yearlong clinical placements, expert mentors, and EPP curricula integrated with clinical practice—distinguish residencies from other EPPs, and they are enabled by close partnerships between EPPs and districts.[16] Outside of these core features, residencies vary in the extent to which they emphasize candidate recruiting, placing residents in cohorts, selecting PreK–12 settings to align with EPP practices, and establishing postresidency support such as new teacher induction. In addition, not all programs offer resident stipends, and when they are offered, they vary significantly by amount and can be linked to required postresidency teaching service. Other variations include the degree or certification offered (undergraduate, graduate, postbaccalaureate certification-only) and the types of provider (institution of higher education or nonprofit organization).[17]

Common Elements of High-Quality Teacher Residencies

Prior research has identified several features that effective teacher residencies tend to have in common. Well-designed, high-quality teacher residencies typically:

- consist of strong partnerships between local education agencies and teacher preparation programs, sometimes with participation of other entities (e.g., unions, community-based organizations);
- require a full year of residency working alongside an accomplished mentor teacher who is the teacher of record (the mentor teacher is typically provided compensation and training for serving as a mentor);
- tightly integrate coursework about teaching and learning with classroom practice;
- place cohorts of residents in “teaching schools” that model evidence-based practices with diverse learners;

- offer ongoing mentoring and support for residency graduates hired by the partner local education agency after they enter the teaching workforce;
- recruit diverse candidates for specific district instructional and hiring needs, often in shortage areas; and
- provide financial support, often in exchange for the resident's commitment to teach in the district for a minimum number of years.

Sources: Fitz, J., & Yun, C. (2024). *Successful teacher residencies: What matters and what works* [Brief]. Learning Policy Institute; Guha, R., Hyler, M. E., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2016). *The teacher residency: An innovative model for preparing teachers*. Learning Policy Institute; Yun, C., & DeMoss, K. (2020). *Sustainable strategies for funding teacher residencies: Lessons from California*. Learning Policy Institute.

Research shows that retention is higher for teachers prepared through residencies than for other new teachers in their districts.[18] Retention rates for residency completers vary by program, but typically range from 80% to 95% after 3 years, exceeding the retention rates of comparison teachers in the same districts by at least 10 percentage points.[19] Additionally, a recent review of research on the effectiveness of teacher residencies found that residency completers tended to express more positive perceptions of their preparation for teaching and were perceived by their employers as more effective than other new teachers. Residency preparation was also associated with improved PreK–12 student outcomes.[20]

Research on Texas residency programs that predated the TCLAS grant likewise showed stronger retention rates than other traditional preservice and alternative programs. Furthermore, these differences in retention rates were found both at the school and the state levels, indicating that residency completers were being retained both at the school that initially hired them and in the state's public school teacher workforce.[21]

Because residencies are associated with improved teacher effectiveness and retention compared to other routes into the profession, the expansion of residency pathways may be a promising strategy to reduce state-level teacher shortages.

Because residencies are associated with improved teacher effectiveness and retention compared to other routes into the profession, the expansion of residency pathways may be a promising strategy to reduce state-level teacher shortages.[22] As documented in a 2024 Learning Policy Institute report, nearly half of U.S. states have made investments in residency programs in recent years, and the number of residencies has grown from around 50 programs in 2016 to at least 440 in 2023–24.[23] States have established and supported residencies through a variety of means. Some have used administrative action, establishing grant programs under state agencies and codifying regulatory changes. Others have made legislative changes, including, in some cases, the appropriation of new funding. Still others have started off with state agency actions such as grants and code changes that are subsequently incorporated into statute, and sometimes also supported financially through legislation.[24] The TCLAS residency grant was an example of state agency action.

Overview of the Research

This study was launched in 2023 to examine how the TCLAS residency grant program supported the implementation of teacher residency programs in Texas. It was driven by the following questions:

- At the state level, how was the TCLAS residency grant program structured and implemented to strengthen the teacher workforce by seeding and supporting residency programs? How has the TCLAS residency grant program, including its technical assistance provisions, built capacity to support teacher residency programs?
- At the local level, what structures have EPPs, districts, and Education Service Centers put in place to implement TCLAS residency programs? How have district and EPP practitioners experienced TCLAS residency implementation? What have districts, EPPs, Education Service Centers, and technical assistance providers done to support sustainable post-TCLAS residency implementation?
- What additional policy levers could support districts, EPPs, Education Service Centers, and technical assistance providers in continuing and scaling teacher residencies post-TCLAS?

The research is based primarily on interviews and document analysis. We interviewed leaders, faculty, and staff at three EPPs and at their TCLAS residency partner PreK–12 school districts, including mentor teachers and site coordinators (EPP clinical faculty). We also interviewed current teacher residents as well as residency program completers. For broader perspectives on TCLAS implementation, we interviewed state agency and technical assistance provider leaders and staff. We also reviewed and analyzed relevant documents, including state legislation and administrative code; school and district policies; EPP handbooks and guidelines; technical assistance provider research and practice guides; and residency-related publications from research, policy, and media sources.

We identified the three EPP study sites through a multistage, iterative process that prioritized evidence of program quality. First, we consulted with experts in the field and state-level stakeholders to create a list of programs with strong in-state reputations. We then conducted background research, reviewing program websites, accreditation documents, and research reports. We also analyzed publicly available surveys of program completers and their employers and took note of markers of program distinction such as grant awards and state recognition. To make the final selection of study sites, we took into account programs' locations, student populations, and progress in residency program implementation to enhance the applicability of findings across contexts.

Overview of the Report

This report offers state policymakers and practitioners in Texas insights into the implementation of the TCLAS residency grant program. It does so through a description of key residency program features, progress and challenges in TCLAS implementation, and conditions that facilitated grant program uptake. While it is focused on Texas, this report provides lessons applicable to other states, enabling and incentivizing residency programs.

The next section of this report describes the teacher preparation policy context in Texas along with the specifics of the TCLAS residency grant program and its mechanisms for supporting and sustaining paid teacher residencies. Following this description, the next three sections lay out the study's findings.

The first focuses on the features of the TCLAS residency grant program that guided and supported program implementation, including requirements that established the TCLAS residency model, promoted shared governance and ownership among partners, and enabled its adaptation to local contexts. The second lays out how TCLAS provisions supporting paid resident stipends and post-grant program sustainability played out in practice, delving into identified and anticipated challenges for program sustainability and expansion. The third section describes district and EPP uptake of TCLAS-supported residencies, from the establishment of district partnerships with state-vetted EPP residency programs through ongoing implementation motivated by perceived program benefits. The report concludes with policy recommendations for supporting residencies in Texas and in other states with similar teacher workforce goals.

Texas Teacher Policy Context and the TCLAS Residency Grant Program

Teacher workforce challenges in Texas have driven substantial policy activity in recent years, creating the context in which the Texas COVID Learning Acceleration Supports (TCLAS) residency grant program was conceived and launched. In this section, we describe the state-level teacher workforce policy initiatives put in motion in Texas. We then present a detailed snapshot of the TCLAS residency grant program. These descriptions form the background for the findings and recommendations laid out in the sections that follow.

Texas Teacher Workforce Policy Context

In 2019, Texas lawmakers, aiming to improve teacher compensation and to address the uneven availability of qualified educators, passed House Bill 3. This legislation raised minimum teacher salaries and established the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA), a program to boost the pay of "top-performing" teachers working in districts historically most affected by teacher shortages: those in rural areas and in areas with high poverty rates.[25]

Following the passage of this legislation, the Texas State Board for Educator Certification acted to support the teacher workforce from the preparation side, launching the development of a statewide Effective Preparation Framework in 2021. This framework, which was disseminated statewide and incorporated into state administrative code in 2024, includes five foundational levers to guide educator preparation programs (EPPs) in the preparation of new teachers. The levers are intended to set baseline expectations to inform local EPP improvement efforts aligned with planned state accountability systems.[26] The Texas Education Agency (TEA) intends to use the framework as the foundation for future changes to regulations governing EPP reporting, improvement, and approval processes.[27]

Effective Preparation Framework Foundational Levers

The Texas Effective Preparation Framework consists of five foundational levers that EPPs [educator preparation programs] pull to ensure that novice teachers are well prepared. They are:

1. **EPP Leadership and Planning.** Develops, implements, monitors, and continuously improves program systems and structures aligned with the program's vision, mission, guiding principles, and strategic plan.
2. **Talent Recruitment and Management.** Strategically recruits, selects, supports, and retains teacher candidates through successful completion of the preparation program.
3. **P–12 Partnership.** Builds and maintains strong, collaborative partnerships with LEAs [local education agencies] by establishing a shared vision, mutual accountabilities, and ongoing governance practices to produce well-prepared beginning teachers ready to meet the partner's needs.
4. **Curriculum.** Designs standards-aligned curriculum that integrates meaningful practice-based experiences and builds candidates' skills to meet the needs of all students.

5. **Instruction and Support.** Structures meaningful, integrated practice-based experiences throughout the preparation program and provides ongoing opportunities for coaching, development, and continuous improvement of teacher candidates, program faculty and staff, and LEA partners.

Source: Texas Education Agency. (2024). *The Effective Preparation Framework*.

In 2022, as the Effective Preparation Framework was under development, Governor Greg Abbott launched a statewide Teacher Vacancy Task Force to examine teacher retention and recruitment challenges across the state. The task force was composed of educators and administrators from districts across the state, though, notably, it did not include representatives from the EPPs that supply teachers to these districts. The task force issued its report in 2023. Among its recommendations were to improve teacher compensation and to further incentivize the broad distribution of qualified and experienced educators.[28]

Texas Teacher Vacancy Task Force Recommendations

To address challenges related to teacher recruitment and retention, the Texas Teacher Vacancy Task Force developed the following recommendations focused on support for teachers.

Compensation:

- Increase overall compensation and support strategic compensation strategies.
- Enhance teachers' total compensation packages.
- Provide incentives and support for hard-to-staff areas.

Training and support:

- Improve the pipeline and preservice preparation of novice teachers.
- Expand training and support for teacher mentorship and teacher leadership opportunities.
- Provide access to and support for high-quality instructional materials.

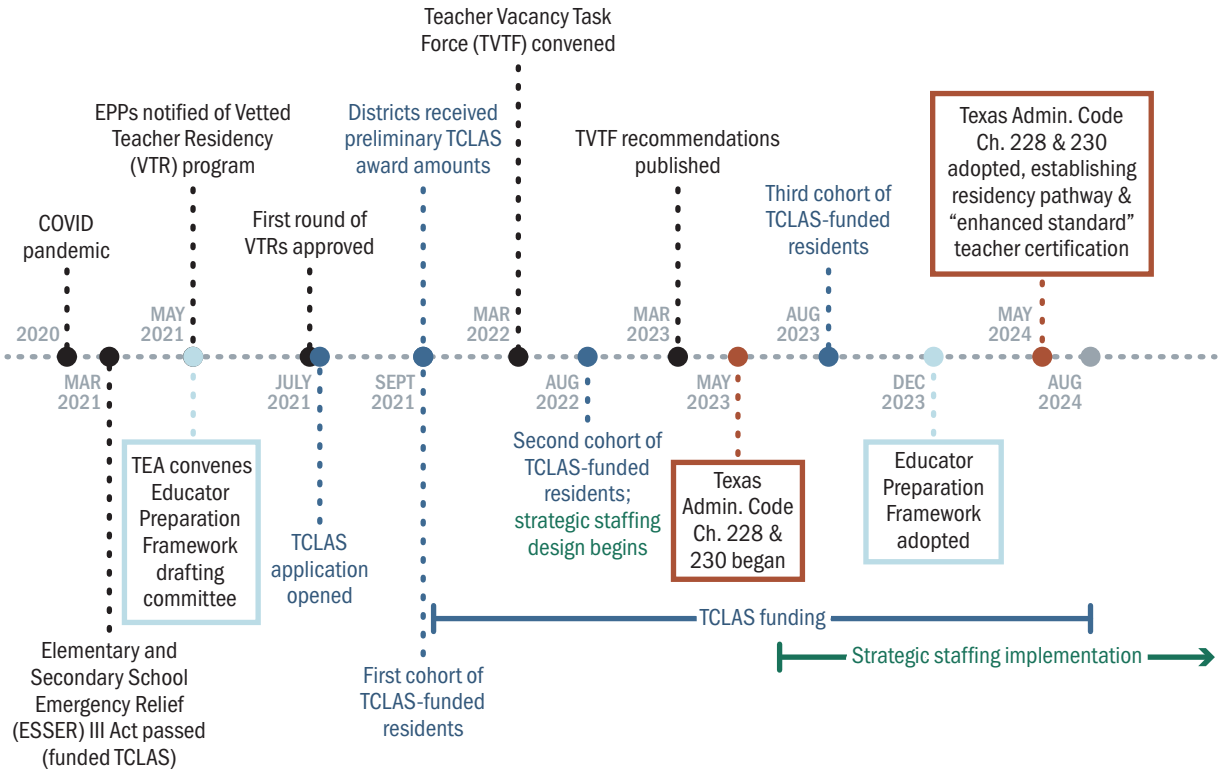
Working conditions:

- Demonstrate respect and value for teacher time.
- Ensure schoolwide culture and discipline supports.

Source: Texas Education Agency. (2023). *Teacher Vacancy Task Force final report—Executive summary*.

Both the recommendations of the Teacher Vacancy Task Force and the completed Effective Preparation Framework were issued during the time period of TCLAS implementation (see Figure 4). They shared common emphases with TCLAS, creating coherence across these different articulations of state teacher preparation priorities. Features of the Effective Preparation Framework that overlapped with the TCLAS residency model included support for continuous program improvement, strong EPP–district partnerships, practice-based curricula and experiences, and cross-partnership collaboration and professional development. Commonalities across Teacher Vacancy Task Force recommendations and TCLAS goals included emphases on improving teacher preparation; building a robust teacher pipeline; and enhancing teacher career ladder opportunities for experienced educators, including teacher candidate mentors.

Figure 4. Texas Teacher Workforce Policy Timeline



Note: EPP = educator preparation program; TCLAS = Texas COVID Learning Acceleration Supports.

Sources: McLoughlin, J., & Yoder, M. (2021, July 13). *TCLAS deep dive webinar: Decision 5: Residency program support* [Presentation slides]. Texas Education Agency; Texas Education Agency. (2024). *The Effective Preparation Framework*. (accessed 09/06/2024); Texas Education Agency. (2024). *High-quality educator preparation and support*. (accessed 09/06/2024); Texas Education Agency. (2023). *Teacher Vacancy Task Force final report—Executive summary*; Texas Education Agency. (2021, August 4). *Texas COVID Learning Acceleration Supports (TCLAS) program*; Texas Education Agency. (2021, June). *Texas COVID Accelerated Learning Supports (TCLAS) 6.24.21 Superintendent call* [Presentation slides]; Texas Education Agency. (2024, December 11). *Texas educator preparation programs newsletter: December 11, 2024*.

TCLAS Residency Grants

The Texas COVID Learning Acceleration Supports (TCLAS) program was launched in 2021. TCLAS was a large, broadly focused initiative, offering a set of 10 grant funding program options ("decisions") for K–12 school districts. TCLAS distributed a total of $1.4 billion across these funding options, sourced from federal COVID-19 relief funding as well as state general revenue appropriated by the legislature.[29] The High-Quality, Sustainable Residencies Program grant, also known as TCLAS Decision 5, received $91.2 million of the TCLAS total, with $78.6 million allocated to fund teacher resident stipends and district costs while $12.6 million paid for in-kind technical assistance (TA) to districts.[30] Included in the grant funding was support for Educational Service Center (ESC) staff providing district TA. Over 3 school years, from fall 2021 through spring 2024, the TCLAS residency grant funded more than 85 district–EPP partnerships preparing more than 2,000 residents across the state.[31]

The funding provided to districts was largely directed toward paying resident stipends while TA funding flowed to TA providers. Stipends were $20,000 per resident for the residency year, for up to 20 residents for each of the 3 years of the grant program.[32] Districts received an additional $5,000 per resident to be used, at the district's discretion, for program expenses such as mentor teacher stipends and district coordinator salaries. The grant paid state-approved TA providers $50,000 for each school hosting residents during years 2 and 3 of the TCLAS grant.

TCLAS TA was designed to play a key role in meeting grant program goals. It was a TCLAS requirement that district–EPP partnerships commit to sustaining their paid residency programs entirely through local district funding for at least 1 year after the 3 years of TCLAS funding ended. Strategic staffing was the mechanism for meeting this requirement. Working with TA providers and their EPP partners, districts were expected to adopt one of several strategic staffing models to reconfigure educator positions, free up resources, and reallocate these toward sustaining paid residencies.[33]

Purposes of the TCLAS Residency Grant Program

The TEA framed the TCLAS residency grant program as a response to statewide teacher workforce challenges. A TEA presentation at the time of the program launch noted, "Texas schools are consistently onboarding and training new teachers," and that many of those new teachers were teaching students from the state's "most vulnerable populations."[34] After establishing this context, the TEA described the residency grant program's goals: establishing sustainable teacher pipelines, reducing attrition in the teacher workforce, and improving student access across the system to well-qualified teachers.[35]

TEA presentations also touted the benefits of TCLAS residency grants for districts. By enabling the establishment of high-quality, sustainable teacher residency programs, the grant would allow districts to hire teachers who had received a year of preservice training in the same schools where they would work after graduation. According to the TEA, this program would enable a broad array of changes, including:

- the development of a pool of high-quality teacher candidates who are trained on district systems;
- the development of meaningful teacher career pathways that provide leadership incentives and boost teacher retention;
- more targeted coaching support; and
- sustainability of the district's human capital system by being prepared for and having a structured plan to advance Teacher Incentive Allotment approval and growth.[36]

In another presentation focused on the role of strategic staffing, the TEA highlighted additional district benefits from TCLAS participation. These included "a residency pathway in your district" and "increased retention over time due to quality preparation and buy-in within the school community," both of which emphasized the local focus of the TCLAS preparation model.[37] The TEA expanded on these local benefits in the same presentation, noting that "residents *are prepared for the long term to be teachers in their districts* [emphasis in original]," and that preparation included both an understanding of "district context and culture" and the development relationships with "staff, students, and school community."[38]

The TEA highlighted this unique emphasis on preparing teachers for particular schools and communities, referring to the TCLAS residency model as "contextualized preparation." The importance of contextualized preparation in the design of TCLAS was evident in one of the TEA's launch presentations in which TEA staff introduced the residency grant program with this set of rhetorical questions for district leaders (ellipses in original):

The TEA highlighted this unique emphasis on preparing teachers for particular schools and communities, referring to the TCLAS residency model as "contextualized preparation."

- What if … your incoming teachers were prepared in your district prior to day 1, learning from your district context?
- What if … they were engaged in practice-based learning on a daily basis (in your classrooms)?
- What if … they received daily coaching and support from a high-quality mentor teacher (in your schools)?
- What if … they were already building relationships and contributing to positive school culture during their preparation?[39]

The "contextualized preparation" focus of TCLAS stands out as a departure from current and historical educator preparation models. In general, EPPs and state licensure systems are built on the idea that teachers prepared in any EPP in the state are fully qualified, and fully ready, to work at any school in the state. Instead of creating a few hubs of preparation that send teachers to many districts, however, the TCLAS residency program opens up residencies to any districts that choose to implement and support them, with preparation shaped to meet the needs and goals of schools in those districts. This localized approach was an important feature in residency implementation and uptake and has implications for follow-up efforts to support residencies.

High-Quality Residencies

The TCLAS residency grant program was based on collaboration between EPPs and districts. In the words of the TEA, "In high-quality teacher residency models, the EPP and [district] have shared ownership over the preparation, support, and success of the teacher resident."[40] TCLAS requirements thus called upon EPPs and districts, working in partnership, to play specified roles in implementing TCLAS residencies.

District Requirements

To qualify for TCLAS funding, districts had to meet state-defined requirements communicated through the terms of the grant program. To apply for funding, districts were required to assent to a list of "assurances" laying out essential partnership features (see Appendix for the full list) and committing the district to actions that included the following:

- engage in shared program governance through required EPP–district meetings focused on data analysis and residency program improvement;

- work with partner EPPs to develop shared profiles of teacher residents and of mentor teachers, along with recruiting plans for the former and training plans for the latter;
- establish yearlong clinical placements for residents of at least 3 days per week;
- adopt one of several "innovative staffing" models to free up sustainable residency funding;
- facilitate active participation by leaders from districts, schools, and the EPP in technical assistance activities focused on innovative staffing; and
- provide $20,000 stipends to up to 20 residents per school year, for 3 years.[41]

Districts were also required to produce a memorandum of understanding for each residency partnership, demonstrating an existing arrangement with a state-vetted EPP.

The TEA structured the TCLAS district application process to be more accessible, less complex, and less time-consuming than a typical grant application, with a shortened review timeline.[42] The grant was also non-competitive; any district that met all the state requirements would receive an award. These features enabled the launch of residencies within the short window available: The district application opened in mid-July 2021, submissions were due a month later, and preliminary award notifications were out by September 10. Districts completed a second, more detailed stage of the application, concurrent with the launch of the first year of their residency partnerships, in the fall of 2021. Final awards were disbursed starting in December. This two-stage timeline allowed residency partnerships to support their 2021–22 cohort with paid stipends even as the full application process continued.

The straightforward design of the application process was noted by interviewees. One district administrator described the TCLAS application as "easy money," and asked, rhetorically, "Why would districts not apply for it?" Still, TEA staff estimated that around one third of districts that applied for TCLAS residency grant funding did not receive it. The main barrier for these districts, according to TEA staff, was not meeting the requirement for an established partnership with a Vetted Teacher Residency provider. In some cases, districts listed partnerships on their applications that had not been set up. One EPP administrator shared that several districts had named their program as a partner without taking steps to form such a partnership or even contacting the EPP to propose the idea.

Like the application process, TCLAS reporting and accountability requirements were also designed to be straightforward. For each year of TCLAS implementation, districts were required to report the number of resident slots filled, demographics of the residents, number and type of certifications earned by residency completers, and number of residency completers hired as full-time teachers in the district. Accountability provisions consisted of a boilerplate TEA oversight clause, included in all TEA grants, requiring the return of grant monies if a district is found to be out of compliance with grant assurances.[43] This level of oversight required less specific reporting and less district staff time compared to other TEA grants. Furthermore, TEA staff characterized their approach to accountability as collaborative, focused more on correcting problems than on ensuring compliance. This collaborative approach was adopted in alignment with the overall TCLAS goal of establishing and sustaining as many residency programs as possible.

EPP Requirements

Even though districts applied for and received TCLAS grants, EPPs were the districts' required partners. In order to be eligible for participation in residency partnerships, EPPs first had to meet the state definition of "a high-quality teacher residency program." In such a program, according to the TEA:

> The teacher candidate is paired with an experienced, highly effective mentor teacher for a full year of clinical training/co-teaching in a PreK–12 classroom (minimum of 21 hours per week for a full year). Residencies take place at the undergraduate and postbaccalaureate level. In some cases, residents receive a stipend during the yearlong residency.[44]

Each EPP that met this threshold could be designated a Vetted Teacher Residency, eligible for TCLAS participation. The designation process began in May 2021, 2 months before the opening of the district TCLAS application, when EPPs were notified of the opportunity to apply for Vetted Teacher Residency status. EPPs applying for vetted status were required to describe and submit evidence of a list of required program features. These features included data-driven collaboration with a local school district, use of co-teaching models in a yearlong clinical experience, facilitation of resident placements by EPP clinical faculty, and engagement in strategic staffing efforts to support paid teacher residencies. According to TEA guidance, the application was meant to be completed in 1–2 hours, a relatively short span of time compared to other TEA grants, reflecting a time-sensitive and supportive approach that mirrored that of the district applications.[45]

EPP applications were scored by a third-party vendor hired by the TEA; those EPPs that met the state threshold received their Vetted Teacher Residency designation. By the opening of district applications in July 2021, 15 EPPs had received this designation. This total rose to 27 EPPs before the start of the 2022–23 school year and then to 37 before the 2023–24 school year.[46] Of these 37 EPPs, most were 4-year colleges and universities; there were also two community colleges, four regional Education Service Centers, one alternative graduate school of education, and one nonprofit provider.[47]

All of the 15 original EPPs that received vetted status had their residency programs up and running before the launch of the vetting process. They had already built internal systems, funded and hired new positions to support teacher residents (e.g., site coordinators, clinical faculty who observe residents and support their progress), and engaged in shared residency planning and governance with local school districts. In contrast, EPPs added in the second and third rounds of the vetting process showed more variation. While some had been operating residency programs for several years, others had only completed a design year and had not yet run a cohort of candidates through their programs. Still, even the newest of the vetted programs had their residencies operating by the time the grants were issued to their partner districts.

The prior experience that vetted EPPs brought to TCLAS illustrates a vital feature of the residency grant program at its launch: District–EPP partnerships were built on the experience of EPPs already implementing state-vetted teacher residencies. As articulated in a TEA presentation, the design of the TCLAS grant was "grounded in work already underway in the state."[48] This design choice had implications for future residency support efforts, as will be described below in this report.

Sustainable Residencies

Among the design features of the TCLAS grant was its focus on "sustainability post-grant funding based on lessons learned in similar grants."[49] Sustainability of paid residencies was addressed by the multiyear technical assistance (TA) provision of TCLAS. Specifically, TCLAS TA was intended to "support the district to continue to pay resident and mentor wages beyond grant funding."[50] This focus illustrates the central role districts played in TCLAS residencies even after applying for and receiving TCLAS funding: Having launched paid residencies, districts were tasked with sustaining them using local funding after the grant ended. Districts would do this with the support of TCLAS TA and in collaboration with partner EPPs, but the responsibility rested at the district level.

Sustainability of paid residencies was addressed by the multiyear technical assistance provision of TCLAS.

Sustainability and Strategic Staffing

Sustainability was a TCLAS goal from its inception, and committing to maintain paid residencies at the $20,000 level after the end of TCLAS funding was an essential requirement for applicant districts. The method for maintaining stipends at the TCLAS level after the shift to local funding was strategic staffing. As stated in the grant assurances:

> The applicant must assure that they will design and implement an innovative staffing model plan that will ensure that the teacher residency model will be sustainable, fully funded by district dollars, by SY 2024–2025. The plan must include sustainable funding for teacher resident stipends/salaries.[51]

As the TEA defined it, "strategic staffing design" meant districts would be "making decisions driven by instructional needs in the district to reallocate underutilized, existing local dollars to fund paid teacher residencies for teacher candidates."[52] Within this broad definition, the TEA highlighted three specific functions of strategic staffing models: (1) freeing up funding to pay resident stipends, (2) establishing sustainable residency programs, and (3) forming "the foundation of meaningful educator pipelines" for districts through which residents train on "district-specific competencies and practices."[53] Sustainability, therefore, referred not only to continuing the funding of resident stipends and the maintenance of residency programs, but also to continuing the flow of well-prepared new teachers into the teacher workforce.

TCLAS strategic staffing models could take a variety of forms, and districts had choices in how to implement them. The TEA highlighted four potential staffing models in presentations to EPP and district educators in 2021, exemplifying this variation (see Table 1).

Table 1. Examples of Strategic Staffing Models

Strategic staffing model	Model features
Residents as substitutes	The substitute teaching model relies on residents spending at least 1 day per week serving as a substitute teacher for other teachers in the school, receiving pay through dollars typically spent on substitute teachers.
Residents as paraprofessionals	The paraprofessional model relies on two residents splitting the role of one full-time paraprofessional (teacher assistant), redirecting funding lines that may be left unfilled without a full-time hire.
Residents as tutors and enrichment teachers	The tutor and enrichment model relies on residents spending at least 4 days before, during, or after school tutoring students, paid through dollars typically spent on tutoring.
Residents as co-teachers	The co-teacher model puts [a resident] alongside his/her mentor for the entire school year. Because there are two teachers in the classroom, the student-to-teacher ratio is cut in half.

Source: McLoughlin, J. (2021, December 28). *Educator residencies and innovative staffing models* [Presentation slides]. Texas Education Agency.

It is important to note that strategic staffing arrangements were intended to enhance, not detract from, residents' clinical preparation. When residents fill educator roles, there is the potential for these roles to eclipse resident training. The TEA stressed that while residents may "fill instructional needs" in strategic staffing models, doing so "should also be a benefit to their own preparation."[54] In order for districts to maintain residents' focus on their preparation, the TEA emphasized that blending preparation with other educator roles would require "intentional planning and support" from both districts and EPPs.[55]

Technical Assistance and Sustainability

Technical assistance providers worked directly with districts and their EPP partners as they implemented strategic staffing to sustain paid residencies.[56] Among the TCLAS grant assurances were requirements that each district engage with a technical assistance provider (if they had not already done so in the course of pre-TCLAS residency development). Specifically, the assurances stated:

> A designated team of district, campus, and partner EPP–level leaders will actively participate in innovative staffing model training and technical assistance support activities beginning in SY 2022–2023. The designated team must include at least one district and EPP-level leader and a selected set of leaders from each campus on which teacher residents are placed.[57]

Technical assistance for implementing strategic staffing was the one dedicated mechanism in the grant program for sustaining paid residencies at TCLAS-funded levels after TCLAS funding ended. Technical assistance was district-focused, though strategic staffing models were intended to be developed collaboratively as the "product of districts and their EPP partners working alongside a strategic staffing technical assistance provider," as the TEA put it.[58] Leaders and staff from both EPPs and districts were required to participate in technical assistance activities, including quarterly webinars during the first grant year, along with ongoing trainings and meetings.

Two entities were originally approved as TCLAS technical assistance providers: Public Impact and US PREP.[59] These providers were chosen by the TEA for their experience in supporting EPP transformations to teacher residencies and district implementation of strategic staffing models. As the grant proceeded, US PREP became the primary technical assistance provider across the state while Public Impact continued to support the subset of districts with which it had partnered pre-TCLAS. In another evolving role, in addition to providing TA to districts, US PREP took on the training of ESC staff to provide TA.[60] This dual role for US PREP, while not part of the original TCLAS plan, had positive effects. (See Technical Assistance and Regional Education Service Centers.)

US PREP: University–School Partnerships for the Renewal of Educator Preparation

The University–School Partnerships for the Renewal of Educator Preparation (US PREP) National Center, housed at Texas Tech University, was founded in 2015 to support university-based residency programs. By 2024, the US PREP network had grown to 30 universities in six cohorts. Network members make a 4-year commitment to pilot and scale teacher residencies, aiming "to ensure teachers are prepared to work in the classroom on day one after graduation," a goal also articulated as teachers being "day-one ready."

Among residency elements US PREP deems essential are yearlong clinical teaching experiences under the guidance of trained mentor teachers, with strong supervision and coaching, using co-teaching models; district partnerships featuring shared planning, decision-making, and governance informed by data sharing; clinical educator preparation program (EPP) faculty (i.e., site coordinators) who supervise residents and bridge EPP–district partnerships through communication and shared meeting facilitation; and practice-based coursework aligned to clinical placements and keyed to regular teacher candidate evaluation instruments, which are central sources of data for continuous improvement.

Sources: Mellon, E. (2017, June 20). *UH makes strides to ensure teachers are ready on day one*. UH College of Education, News and Features. University of Houston; US PREP National Center. (2023). *Why teacher residencies need to be the standard*; US PREP National Center. (n.d.). *Our model: Transforming teacher preparation*.

Technical Assistance and Regional Education Service Centers

TCLAS technical assistance was intended to operate on multiple levels with interconnected goals: establishing sustainable residencies in local contexts, building capacity for regional Education Service Centers (ESCs) to provide this technical assistance, and improving teacher pipelines on a statewide scale. This multilevel capacity-building was essential in enabling the state to support improvement across the teacher pipeline at the local, regional, and state levels.

The provision of targeted local support across a large state was possible, in part, because of the position of regional ESCs in Texas. ESCs are embedded between the state agency level and the local district–EPP level, authorized by legislation as "service organizations."[61] ESCs are paid by districts for services such as technical assistance, which can be provided to meet district priorities or to support state initiatives. As service organizations, ESCs are not "regulatory arms of the Texas Education Agency," therefore, "participation … in services of the centers is voluntary" for districts and for schools.[62] Enabling ESCs to add strategic staffing TA to their menu of services was a step toward long-term, statewide residency sustainability since this new capacity would be available both to TCLAS districts and other districts launching residencies post-TCLAS.

The mechanism for developing ESC capacity through TCLAS was the establishment of "ESC Fellowships." ESC Fellowships provided training for center staff, known as ESC fellows, who were tasked with providing strategic staffing TA to TCLAS districts. Training for ESC fellows was conducted by US PREP and was carried out while the ESC fellows were providing TCLAS TA to districts, combining an "on-the-job" method with a "train-the-trainer" approach.[63] During the 2022–23 school year, 11 ESCs worked with US PREP to become strategic staffing TA providers. By the time TCLAS funding was ending in 2024, fellows had been trained at all 20 Texas ESCs.

To ensure alignment between the TA providers and district-level implementation statewide, TEA staff provided oversight by attending biweekly meetings with US PREP trainers. In these meetings, agency staff provided input on the structure of support for ESCs and districts, determined focus areas to address moving forward, and generally were available to answer questions. Additionally, designated TEA staff for each region attended in-person TA provider trainings, monthly coaching meetings, and field observations. These arrangements allowed for coordination of different streams of TCLAS work over the course of implementation.

Key Program Features for High-Quality Residency Implementation

As districts and educator preparation programs (EPPs) built partnerships, operated residency programs, and adjusted structures and practices to support them, several features of the Texas COVID Learning Acceleration Supports (TCLAS) grant program emerged as especially salient in facilitating residency implementation. The first of these features was a research-based and well-regarded residency model design that included a full year of gradual-release clinical practice in the classroom of a high-quality mentor teacher. The second was a set of EPP–district residency program and partnership requirements, including shared governance structures and staff roles. The third was the flexibility, agency, and ownership that emerged in residencies and partnerships through grant requirements, which required shared governance while enabling EPPs and districts to shape these governance processes, and residency programs, to fit local contexts. Each of these grant features was influential in guiding and defining residency implementation at EPPs and districts.

Research-Based Residency Model Design

Across districts and EPPs, interviewees consistently expressed positive feedback about the quality of educator preparation in TCLAS residencies. The residency features put into place through TCLAS grant assurances, and before that through the requirements of the Vetted Teacher Residency designation, were well aligned with research on effective teacher residency structures and practices. This section describes these features in detail: the 1-year clinical teaching experience, the co-teaching model used in clinical settings, and the placement of residents with experienced and trained mentor teachers.

Full-Year Residency Placements

EPP and district administrators, mentor teachers, and residents all described the benefits from residents' full-year, in-classroom experiences with their mentor teachers. In one such example, a mentor teacher focused on the advantages of aligning the residency placement with the school year, asserting, "It's not just a snapshot, it's the full year." She went on to explain:

> [Residents] are getting to be part of parent conferences. They get to see beginning-of-the-year activities and end of year, how we wrap up the year. They get to see the growth of the students from the beginning of the year to the end, whereas a student teacher doesn't.

Residents also shared the perspective that the full-year clinical experience is more closely aligned with the realities of teaching than traditional student teaching placements, which are generally shorter in duration. As one resident noted:

> I am there [at the school] when the teachers are there. … I'm starting when they start, I leave when they leave, I get there when they get there, and we're in through the thick of it. … We do quite literally everything that a teacher would do, and by the end of the year, we pretty much are doing everything: grades, grade book, teaching every class.

These intensive clinical experiences included responsibilities outside of classroom teaching, encompassing a wide range of teacher roles and duties as residents were brought into their schools' professional educator communities. One resident described how this process started even before the beginning of the school year: "We showed up 2 weeks prior to school starting in August, and we were able to work through the entire staff development, all of the classroom preparations that you don't get to see." She described the planning experience as a "turning point" through which she realized that this early work was setting up systems to facilitate collaboration with students and families: "We've been doing … all this preparation to actually have a relationship with parents and a relationship with kids for the entire year."

Combining a full year of clinical placement with an expectation of full immersion in the clinical setting—along with the practice of co-teaching, discussed further below—created preparation programs held in high regard by both residents and their mentor teachers. Interviewees described residency completers as being fully prepared to lead their classrooms as newly licensed teachers. The shorthand for this level of preparation, in the parlance of US PREP's residency program transformation model adopted by most TCLAS EPPs, was to refer to completers as "day-one ready." This phrase was used frequently by interviewees.

A district administrator who described residents' readiness to teach claimed that "the teacher residents are walking away with so many more tools in their toolbox," compared to student teachers in traditional programs, who experience shorter and less-intensive clinical placements. In another example, a residency graduate, working as a full-time teacher of record in her own classroom, explained how the tools she learned in her residency enabled a focus on bigger-picture instructional needs:

> I came in my first year knowing how to do things. … I knew how to do report cards. I knew how to prepare for the class. I knew what I needed. I knew that I needed name tags. Like little things like that. … I knew how to make a take-home folder, and I didn't have to spend hours and hours at home trying to figure it out before I came. … I wasn't stressed out about the little things; I was able to push past those … and focus on the bigger stuff.

This graduate added that her experience was not unique. "People that I graduated with … say the same thing. They cannot imagine being able to do their job the way they're doing it now without the support and the program that we went through."

Residency programs were said to produce first-year teachers equivalent in competence and confidence to second-year teachers trained in nonresidency pathways. As one EPP staff member asserted, "When they complete the residency and they get hired after graduation, that district is not getting a first-year teacher; that district is getting a second-year teacher. That really is the truth." Similarly, a mentor teacher shared that principals who hire residency completers "are amazed at how knowledgeable they are. They're like a second-year teacher."

Residency programs were said to produce first-year teachers equivalent in competence and confidence to second-year teachers trained in nonresidency pathways.

The director of the EPP residency program in which these residents were enrolled provided a holistic picture of their preparation by expressing his confidence in them. "There's not a student who graduates from our program [who] I won't recommend to any superintendent," he asserted, adding, "They are day-one ready to teach any student in the state." This program director backed his assertion by pointing to his graduates' employment prospects:

> Our May graduates, every single one of them, had a job before they crossed the stage. They had a signed contract before they crossed the stage. … We graduated, I don't know, close to 100, and every single one of them had a signed contract before they crossed the stage.

Co-Teaching and Mentor Support

The full-year clinical experience functioned in concert with another residency program feature, the co-teaching model. The Texas Education Agency (TEA), describing the benefits of the residency program, noted that placing residents in "a co-teaching setting during the entirety of their clinical teaching year" allowed for "intensive practice [that] provides residents with the opportunity for quality teacher development."[64] The requirements and opportunities of co-teaching changed as residents progressed across the clinical year (see Table 2), adding greater responsibilities and more challenging demands over time. Early in the clinical year, mentor teachers and residents most frequently engaged in "one teach, one observe" and "one teach, one assist" models, both of which call for shared practice. As residents gained competence and confidence in the classroom, co-teaching practice shifted to the other strategies that offered more differentiated and independent educator roles.

The co-teaching model positioned teacher residents as full members of the school faculty, sharing in all responsibilities of the educators there, and EPPs made it clear that residents were expected to fulfill the full range of duties of teachers at their school sites. One US PREP staff member described this embeddedness in the community and culture of a school and the difference it made in the experiences of residents:

> The resident is not a visitor on campus. When the resident feels like they belong to the campus, they're part of the district, [and] it makes such a difference. It shifts the mindset from "I'm a university student visiting a classroom" to "This is my classroom. These are my students, and I'm responsible for them." … That personal investment translates into a willingness to be a better teacher, a willingness to receive feedback even when it's uncomfortable, and a willingness to try new things.

An EPP staff member similarly described the differences she perceived, compared to traditional student teaching models, when residents acted as full participants in school communities:

> There's a difference in how they behave with parents and how they communicate and just how they carry themselves … at school pickup and drop-off in the mornings. If I didn't know that that student was a resident, you would think that they were a teacher. Whereas before, [the student teachers] totally [stuck] out.

Table 2. Co-Teaching Strategies

Co-teaching strategy	Description
One teach, one assist	One teacher has primary instructional responsibility while the other assists students with their work, monitors behavior, or corrects assignments.
One teach, one observe	One of the advantages in co-teaching is that more detailed observation of students engaged in the learning process can occur. With this approach, for example, co-teachers can decide in advance what types of specific observational information to gather during instruction and can agree on a system for gathering the data.
Team teaching	Both teachers are responsible for planning, and they share the instruction of all students. The lessons are taught by both teachers, who actively engage in conversation, not lecture, to encourage discussion by students. Both teachers are actively involved in the management of the lesson and in discipline.
Station teaching	Both teachers divide the instructional content, and each takes responsibility for planning and teaching part of it. In station teaching, the classroom is divided into various teaching centers. The teacher and teacher candidate are at particular stations; the other stations are run independently by the students or by a teacher's aide.
Alternative teaching	In alternative teaching, one teacher manages most of the class while the other teacher works with a small group inside or outside of the classroom. The small group does not have to integrate with the current lesson.
Parallel teaching	In parallel teaching, the teacher and teacher candidate plan jointly but split the classroom in half to teach the same information at the same time.

Source: University of Houston. (2023). *Student teaching handbook* [Internal document].

Guiding residents to grow into full instructional partners in co-teaching required substantial investment in resident–mentor relationships, but this appeared to pay meaningful dividends for residents, mentor teachers, and K–12 students. One mentor teacher described some such benefits, stating, "It's just like having a whole other teacher in there. It is awesome. … She knows the classroom management. She knows the kids very well. She knows their parents. She knows what's expected." An EPP staff member made a similar point, asserting, "The classrooms that had residents basically had two teachers. … It was extremely beneficial to those students." Residents could also provide continuity when mentor teachers stepped out of their classrooms. As one mentor teacher explained, "No matter if you're in there or not … the kids are still getting taken care of."

Mentor teachers also reaped other benefits from co-teaching, including learning from their residents. As one mentor teacher described:

> The mentor starts learning from the resident because the resident has seminar classes where they're learning the newest research and education [strategies]. The teacher gets the benefit of that. It's the shared learning that happens. It's a beautiful thing to watch.

One additional benefit of service as a mentor teacher was a reshaping of interactions with other teachers and administrators, which created new professional opportunities. As one K–12 administrator stated, "I have seen these already phenomenal cooperating teachers become really, really, really good teacher leaders." He even saw improvement in his own practice. "As the instructional leader of the campus," he said, "I became a better principal because I'm having these very meaningful, intentional coaching conversations with these residents and with cooperating teachers."

Specificity in Required Features

TCLAS relied on mutual effort and investment across partnerships. To support these partnerships—and to implement the yearlong clinical placements and co-teaching—the TCLAS grant specified certain structures and practices of residency partnerships. Guidelines laid out, for example, the number and types of shared governance meetings between EPPs and districts, staff attendance at meetings, topics for collaborative planning, responsibilities for mentor teacher training, and parameters for engagement in technical assistance processes.

One notable outcome of this specificity, seemingly antithetical to the reputation of top-down education reform, is the positivity with which it was received by educators and administrators at EPPs and districts alike. They commended the requirements relating to shared program governance between districts and EPPs as helpful and productive. They also appreciated the defined roles and responsibilities for EPP and district staff—site coordinators at EPPs, mentor teachers in districts—and described these roles as essential for implementing residency programs, developing residents, and maintaining district–EPP partnerships.

Specific Parameters for EPP–District Governance Meetings

In designing the TCLAS requirements, the TEA recognized the need to work across long-standing silos that separated educator preparation and practice. To this end, TCLAS districts and their partner EPPs were required to abide by structured approaches that enabled shared governance and ownership. Some of the outcomes of these approaches are described in the next section; the focus here is on the specifics of the grant requirements. These were laid out in the assurances of the grant application (see Appendix for the full list of assurances). Districts receiving TCLAS residency grants were required to do the following:

- [Convene] structured governance meetings with their EPP partner at least 3 times annually to analyze teacher resident data and develop plans for teacher residency continuous improvement.
- Collaboratively develop a teacher resident profile, aligned with the applicant's educator pipeline needs, that they ensure will be used to recruit, select, and place teacher residents.
- Collaboratively develop a cooperating teacher profile that includes consideration of the cooperating teacher's impact on student achievement to recruit and select high-quality cooperating teachers.

- [Designate a] team of district, campus, and partner EPP–level leaders [to] actively participate in innovative staffing model training and technical assistance support activities. The designated team must include at least one district and EPP-level leader and a selected set of leaders from each campus on which teacher residents are placed.[65]

These meetings, processes, and structures enabled, and strongly influenced, the workings of residency partnerships. One district administrator explained that "having those governance meetings and being able to have … that district–EPP relationship [has been] the true key to success." This administrator also saw enhanced collaboration as important because of its effects. As he noted, once the shared governance process is in place, "There's not a tension of 'We can't broach this subject.'" Rather, he said, there is an attitude of "Let's just throw it on the table and work on it." Well into the first year with teacher residents in place, this administrator was describing progress in the evolution of shared governance:

> I find it much more connected now, even when we have difficulties to go through. … We're having great communication. It's just, what's best for our kids? What's best for our teachers? What's best for our campus? What's best for the [residents]?

From the EPP side, one staff member expressed a similar experience. While acknowledging that "there have been speed bumps" in establishing the EPP–district partnership, she maintained, "We're all in the work together." She explained, "They bring an issue or a concern that they have to our meetings … and we're able to address those and fix those." She illustrated this point with an example of district–EPP problem-solving:

> We were pulling the residents out on Fridays … to complete their on-campus coursework. And the districts were saying that Friday is a really high [frequency] sub day. Also, the fun spirit days and the fun dress-up days [happen on Fridays] and that residents were missing that camaraderie on campus, and they were missing those experiences. … All the hard work you've been doing Monday through Thursday—Fridays are like the payoff day, and they were missing that payoff. And so we were like, "OK, what day works best for you [to pull out residents to attend EPP classes]?" And for some districts the day that they tended to not need subs as much was like a Tuesday or Thursday. So, we changed it.

This example, demonstrating how ongoing feedback across district–EPP partnerships led to iteration in program practices, connects to another required feature of TCLAS partnerships: the use of multiple sources of data to support joint decision-making. Drawing on resident and mentor teacher performance data from clinical assessments and other available data related to assessment and employment, districts and EPPs were able to refine their residency programs and practices over the course of the TCLAS grant period. A site coordinator described this process from the perspective of practice, explaining, "We look at data, we look at trends. And make decisions based on that." Another EPP faculty member gave an example of data-driven change from her work on resident clinical supervision:

> We used a lot of specific data from those governance meetings along with data from our [residents], POP cycles [pre-observation/observation/post-observation]. … We completely redid [resident observation] checklists based on what we saw in those governance meetings and based on what we saw in their POP cycles.

The use of data to inform governance also had the effect of spurring broader discussions about the goals of educator preparation in local contexts. In one instance, an EPP staff member asked, "Are we producing the populations of teachers that [fit well in] our region?" This question prompted EPP faculty to "stop working in those silos and really begin having those conversations," asking questions like, "What type of teachers are we producing? And how can we be a change agent to ensure that we are … creating a teaching population that really fits the needs of our demographics and our districts?" This faculty member explained, "We haven't had those conversations before," and this process led the faculty to come to a new conclusion about their work. As she put it, "They realized we have this whole department, but we're not producing … enough ESL bilingual candidates to support our region."

Specified District and EPP Staff Roles

The implementation of residency-specific processes and relationships at EPPs and districts was facilitated by the staffing of educator roles essential to TCLAS residencies. Two such roles stood out in importance. The first was the site coordinator, an EPP clinical faculty position with responsibilities across institutions and settings in EPP–district partnerships. The second role, for district educators, was that of the mentor teacher (or host teacher), required in each residency classroom.

Turning to the site coordinator role, we begin with an important clarification: While the Texas Vetted Teacher Residency specifications referred to required clinical faculty as "field supervisors," study site EPPs used the title "site coordinator" in keeping with the terminology used in US PREP's research-aligned residency transformation model. In this report, we follow these EPPs in using the term "site coordinator." Using this term also allows us to differentiate the site coordinator role from the field supervisor clinical faculty position at traditional EPPs. Field supervisors have some duties that overlap with those of site coordinators: They observe student teachers in their placement classrooms, coordinate with mentor teachers, and conduct both formal and informal assessments. TCLAS EPP site coordinators, however, also fulfill a broader range of responsibilities and functions that set them apart from traditional field supervisors.

In the US PREP residency model, which greatly influenced the TCLAS model, the site coordinator is a member of the EPP faculty who:

- evaluates residents and teaches courses (student teaching seminars and methods);
- conducts walk-through observations, formal observations, and coaching of residents;
- is trained and calibrated on the resident evaluation tool;
- has demonstrated proficient coaching practices;
- facilitates observation tool norming;
- is embedded within the district (with relationships with administrators and mentor teachers);
- plans and facilitates data-driven, quarterly mentor trainings and ongoing mentor meetings and support;
- plans and facilitates data-driven, quarterly governance meetings; and
- attends university meetings and programs, including faculty meetings and professional development, as appropriate.[66]

Because US PREP was a residency TA provider for Texas EPPs both before and during TCLAS, US PREP's description of the site coordinator role closely mirrors the TCLAS site coordinator role as it played out across participating EPPs, though there were some local differences in how the role was structured and funded. For example, while site coordinators at participating EPPs were in all cases responsible for clinical instruction and support of residents at placement schools, the number of school sites varied from 1 to 3 per site coordinator while the number of residents for which they were responsible varied from 3 to 20.[67]

Even with such differences, a commonality across residency partnerships and contexts was the centrality of the site coordinator role. No other faculty role in the TCLAS residency model—or the US PREP residency model—had formal responsibilities across so many aspects of the partnership. This is why US PREP described the site coordinator role as "a critical linchpin" in residency implementation.[68] As one US PREP staff member noted of site coordinators, "They're engaged with all stakeholders. They're the one responsible for gathering the data and supporting residents and mentors and principals during the actual yearlong residency."

Among the ways site coordinators enhanced the residency field experience was by working across the boundaries between EPPs and districts. Their partnership responsibilities included facilitating EPP–district communication and sharing residency program governance. An EPP staff member highlighted the advantages that the addition of site coordinators conferred to the new residency program compared to previous program practices:

> Preresidency there was no communication. … There wasn't clear communication from that instructor to the [supervising] teacher that the [teacher candidate] was placed with about what the field requirements were, or the assignments for the semester. So, I would receive questions from [supervising] teachers halfway through the semester like, "I'm not real sure what the [student teacher] is supposed to be doing. They're telling me this, but I'm not real sure. Or the [student teacher]'s telling me this, but in past semesters, when I've had these [student teachers], it's been like this." … Now we all communicate so tightly and check in with each other multiple times through the semester.

Though they were EPP faculty members, site coordinators were also embedded in school districts, allowing close collaboration with mentor teachers and with school and district administrators. As one site coordinator described, "I'm there all the time … which I think is really the key." In this embedded role, site coordinators were, in ways that echo residents' experiences, members of their school communities. "I go in and teachers recognize me, the kids recognize me," one noted, adding, "I get a lot of hugs." Having university faculty members embedded in school sites also enhanced connections between schools and partner EPPs. One mentor teacher asserted that EPP faculty "understand the program more" because of the regular presence of site coordinators. "They're here, they're at the campus, they're communicating with us. … It's evolved into a really good working [relationship]."

The other specified educator role highlighted in TCLAS is that of the mentor teacher. Traditional EPPs also rely upon mentor teachers, who are sometimes known as cooperating or host teachers: They are the teachers of record who host student teachers in their classrooms. There are some clear differences between TCLAS mentor teachers and traditional cooperating teachers. In traditional programs, mentors are generally chosen by schools or districts without EPP input. In TCLAS-supported residency partnerships, EPPs and districts were required to collaborate in the selection and training of mentor teachers. In traditional EPP models, according to interviewees' descriptions, clinical placements are shorter in duration

than residency placements, and mentor teachers have few connections to EPP programming outside of clinical faculty visits to their classrooms. The TCLAS grant, in contrast, required a more expansive mentor role. In all TCLAS residencies, mentors worked with residents for the entire academic year. Mentors' interactions with residents were shaped by the co-teaching model, which was demanding for mentors and residents alike. Furthermore, these demands evolved throughout the year as mentors expanded their repertoire of co-teaching strategies and scaffolded residents' progress as they took on greater responsibilities. In some TCLAS partnerships, mentor teachers were involved in resident selection; in traditional EPPs, candidate selection would not include PreK–12 educators.

All TCLAS mentor teachers also participated in ongoing professional development sessions linked to their work in residency programs. These professional development sessions, conducted by the site coordinators, also exceeded standard EPP practice. One mentor teacher described these sessions:

> We meet monthly … and we talk about the observations, the walk-throughs that have been done on the [residents]. [Site coordinators] provide us with that feedback to see where they are, what they need to be working on. So, we look at a lot of data that's been [collected by the site coordinator] through the walk-throughs. It's very beneficial. We also get to contribute by giving some things that we would like them to talk about in their classes on Fridays to help the [residents], and they're really great about taking back that information. And they really do implement that into their Friday classes. So, it's very helpful.

All of these features—expanded in-classroom responsibilities, district–EPP collaboration in selection, training, and professional development processes—set the TCLAS residency mentor role apart, as did collaboration in mentor selection and training across district–EPP boundaries, with responsibilities and participation by PreK–12 and EPP educators.

Shared Ownership and Governance in Partnerships and Technical Assistance

As described above, TCLAS grant requirements were specific in directing the setup of structures and expectations for residency programs and shared governance. These same structures and expectations also served other purposes beyond providing direction. Shared EPP–district governance structures enabled shared ownership, distributing responsibility and promoting agency on both sides of partnerships while contributing to buy-in as implementation proceeded. Shared governance and shared ownership, in turn, provided opportunities for EPPs and districts to shape TCLAS residency implementation to fit local needs and priorities. In other words, localized differences in residency implementation were enabled by mandated processes and structures that fostered shared program ownership and governance. Furthermore, these processes and structures were built not only into residency partnerships, but also into TCLAS TA, creating a common thread running through all TCLAS-enabled district–EPP collaborative efforts.

Shared EPP–district governance structures enabled shared ownership, distributing responsibility and promoting agency on both sides of partnerships while contributing to buy-in as implementation proceeded.

Shared Ownership and Governance in Residency Partnerships

Requirements for participation in shared governance set up districts and EPPs to jointly plan and implement residencies. One such required structure, partnership governance meetings, created time and space for collaboration, empowering leaders, faculty, and staff from districts and EPPs to make decisions fitted to local priorities, needs, and conditions. As one EPP program director explained, governance meetings were opportunities for partners to ask fundamental questions such as, "How do you support us? How do we support you?" A district administrator explained this process in greater detail, saying, "They told us what they were seeing from the university side, and we were showing and explaining what was happening from the district partner side." Describing the effects of the process, he said, "They valued our voice, and we valued theirs, and it was just this great partnership that has just taken off."

Requiring EPP and district educators to work together also smoothed shared decision-making and kept up momentum in residency partnership implementation. One EPP staff member attributed these benefits to the presence of decision-makers from both partners:

> You have all of the key players in the same room that can make decisions right then. It's not like, "Let me get back with you. Let me get with my boss, and I'll get back with you," or "Let me run it up the flagpole, and I'll get back with you."

Additionally, by facilitating decision-making rather than delay, these meetings brought clarity to shared responsibilities. As one district staff member shared when describing how meetings ended, "Rather than 'you hope it doesn't fall off their plate,' everyone leaves knowing what the change is going to be."

A district administrator characterized the collaborative nature of residency partnerships in a similar fashion, highlighting the effectiveness of the partners' communication and the confidence this instilled. "You're going to be heard. They're not just blowing you off. … They're going to set up a meeting, and they want to hear what you've got and what they can offer." In another example, a staff member from a different district made a direct connection between relationship improvement and program improvement:

> Just having the opportunity to have really open dialogue and support and communication. … I think that's one reason that our teacher residency program is improving. It's just because of our relationship. … If you're not communicating, just treading water, you're not making any forward momentum.

Capturing this sentiment succinctly, an EPP administrator asserted that shared governance "improved at the speed of trust."

Another apparent result of required participation and responsibilities in residency governance was that the barriers between districts and EPPs became more permeable. Shared governance structures not only fostered improved communication, coordination, and cross-institutional support, but they also seemed to produce an increased sense of program ownership among educators on both sides of partnerships. At both districts and EPPs, educators shared their impressions that they could exercise agency and responsibility over their programs. Lower institutional barriers were also apparent in districts' and EPPs' shared efforts to align residents' EPP coursework with practice-based classroom competencies and to align those competencies with district-specific priorities and initiatives.

Shared Ownership and Governance in Technical Assistance

Engagement in shared EPP–district governance, including the work of ascertaining and meeting local needs, was also enabled by TCLAS TA. As with shared governance structures and practices, TCLAS assurances specified the participation of both residency partners in technical assistance. These requirements called for "a designated team of district, campus, and partner EPP–level leaders" to participate, including "at least one district and EPP-level leader and a selected set of leaders from each campus on which teacher residents are placed."[69]

Also in line with the implementation of shared partnership governance, the specificity of TCLAS in TA participation was seen as an important feature for getting collaborative efforts up and running. As a US PREP staff member working on TCLAS TA put it, "Without a technical assistance structure to actually make that happen … you don't have the support to pull the folks together." Along with the required meeting structure, required participation by district and EPP leaders created opportunities for progress, as another staff member working on technical assistance laid out:

> They need to be able to make decisions at the table, and the right people need to be there—the right people from the EPP, the right people from the district—to be able to make decisions. If not, then it's just not a valuable use of their time [if] people are having to say, "Well, I think we can do this, but I need to go back and check with so-and-so to see if they can sign off on that." So having the right people at the table and making time and space for those conversations and decisions were really important and something that we really tried to build into our approach.

From the district side, an administrator provided a similar description of how TA requirements gathered the right personnel in the room to make decisions about strategic staffing:

> I remember when I went to our first meetings with [the TA provider] … we had somebody from the budget office there, we had somebody from our curriculum department there, we had somebody from our data analysis department there, we had school leadership there. So, we had a wide range of partners at our table—the core group that were able to speak about the full picture of the needs on the campus[es]. And then [we were able to discuss] how can we fund this, and are we able to do that?

Built on the foundation of these participation requirements, district and EPP engagement in technical assistance played out along the same lines as the partners' participation in shared governance, development of shared agency and ownership, and alignment of residency structures to district and EPP contexts: Technical assistance structures enabled cross-institutional conversations and coordinated actions, and it was through these processes that local actors shaped TA processes to meet local conditions. As a TA provider described:

> Those partnerships are requiring us to really take a look at the needs and how [districts and EPPs] together [are] having conversations and planning and action planning to meet those needs … because what's needed in [a] rural [district] looks very different than what's needed in a Houston Independent School District.

Collaboration in TA processes also seemed to enhance broader collaboration across residency partnerships. While strategic staffing was the focus of TCLAS TA, the relationships and structures established to facilitate shared responsibility for strategic staffing also opened up additional possibilities for EPPs and districts to iterate on their residency models. As one staff member at a TA provider described:

> Innovation doesn't happen in silos. It's happening because they're now talking. So yes, strategic staffing might have been at a starting point, but look how many other innovative ideas have morphed as a result of these conversations, which is what we want to happen. … And I think that's what's happening, at least with this partnership: They're thinking outside of the box.

This expanded application of TCLAS-required collaboration not only shows mandated structures and practices being applied to shape residencies to local needs and priorities but also adds an element of innovation.

This description of residency partners "thinking outside of the box" also points toward another contributing factor to shared ownership and local flexibility in TCLAS TA, namely, the approach technical assistance provider staff adopted in their work. The US PREP and ESC staff members we interviewed characterized themselves as facilitators and described a flexible and adaptive orientation toward supporting district–EPP partnerships. One staff member at an ESC made this point when she likened her approach to TA to differentiating classroom instruction:

> [I] kind of think about it like with students, every student has different needs. Every campus is going to have different needs because their demographics and their populations are different. … So, I think you have to know about those relationships, what is that relationship like between them, and then really plan accordingly based upon that relationship.

As they adapted TA to local needs, providers also aimed to build local capacity. They did so by equipping administrators and leaders with the tools to understand strategic staffing in their school and district contexts. A member of the TEA staff described this process in practice:

> Part of the strategic staffing strategy was actually, "Let's actually give folks … support to look at their budgets and understand, tangibly, what those numbers actually look like within their own context and what they really could reallocate or reinvest." When we talk about it conceptually, oftentimes the CFO isn't at the table with the HR director. … So, I think the value of part of this is just pulling the right people together and building the value proposition … and then talking about what's truly feasible.

These approaches were enabling factors for TCLAS TA, like shared residency program governance, to be implemented in localized ways, adapted to the various context in which districts and EPPs are operating. As described by an EPP administrator, "The cool thing about it was we didn't have to do it exactly the way they told us to. They let you be flexible as far as what fits you."

Flexible implementation of TCLAS TA also shared some features with pre-TCLAS TA provided by US PREP to Texas EPPs. Some of these EPPs also participated in TCLAS. One EPP faculty member, a former site coordinator, described US PREP's pre-TCLAS TA as EPP-led, with US PREP staff asking themselves, "How

can we support this?" At the same time, the faculty member stressed, US PREP emphasized the need to maintain "the components of … a high-quality residency." She elaborated, "They're not married to 'this is what it has to look like.' But these are the components."

Both the TCLAS and pre-TCLAS TA examples illustrate how TCLAS providers approached a key dilemma in TA: maintaining consistency with the model while allowing for adaptation to each particular setting. Over the course of the TCLAS grant, this balance emerged in the shared ownership and governance that characterized TCLAS partnerships and TA. The systems and practices imposed by the grant enabled collaboration and agency, opening up opportunities for adaptation and innovation. Furthermore, while shared ownership and governance was built into TCLAS, it was also supported by the participation of US PREP. Since US PREP had applied similar principles in previous EPP transformation, US PREP staff carried them into TCLAS in-kind TA and into ESC staff training and guidance.

TCLAS Residency Stipends and Sustainability

Financial supports for Texas COVID Learning Acceleration Supports (TCLAS) implementation consisted of two key elements. One was funding for paid residency placements, which shaped residents' residency experiences and affected recruitment for educator preparation programs (EPPs) and districts. The other was funding for technical assistance (TA) for district strategic staffing efforts, which supported the development of structures and practices to promote residency sustainability.

Residency Stipends

TCLAS required, and funded, $20,000 stipends for residents. Providing stipends for teacher candidates during the residency year offered advantages over unpaid residencies. Stipends opened up access to residencies for more teacher candidates, and TCLAS stipends, while not the sole factor in teacher candidates' choices, were perceived by residents and staff as vital to resident recruitment. Once residents were in their clinical placements, stipends enabled their full participation in the residency model, facilitating focused participation in their clinical experiences and EPP courses.

> Providing stipends for teacher candidates during the residency year offered advantages over unpaid residencies.

The Vital Role of Resident Stipends

As described in the previous section, residents in TCLAS-supported programs are busy. Participating in demanding yearlong residency clinical experiences while completing EPP coursework requirements leaves little room for outside commitments. Residents must juggle other responsibilities outside of their preparation experiences, which for some include obligations to parents, siblings, spouses, or children. They must also pay tuition. TCLAS residents did not, however, have to find jobs to support themselves. The TCLAS residency stipends, put in place to cover living expenses, allowed these teacher candidates to forgo outside employment during their clinical preparation.

For this reason, paid residency stipends were seen as essential for the functioning of TCLAS residencies. As a Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff member put it, "Aspiring teachers can't work for free and learn how to teach well."[70] Across the board, current residents we interviewed maintained that their participation in the yearlong residency was made possible by the availability of the stipend. In a particularly poignant example, a US PREP staff member quoted a resident telling her, "I dropped to my knees and started crying once I got the acceptance letter."

Because stipends affected aspiring residents' ability to choose residency programs, they also affected the size and diversity of applicant pools. As a US PREP staff member concluded:

> Providing access to those high-quality educator preparation programs … it's really important work. It's important for those teacher residents to be able to get access. It's important to be able to diversify, and it's important because we're going to have better teachers in the classroom as a result of it.

Looking at recruitment challenges, an EPP program director claimed the biggest barrier to expanding residency participation was unpaid clinical placements. She described how residency placements without stipends attracted less candidate interest because, "No matter how we try to … explain it as a learning experience and part of your preparation and part of college, they view [clinical placements] as unpaid labor." She further noted that teacher candidates who rely on student loans may feel this even more strongly. "They'll take out the loans to pay tuition," she explained, but when it comes to a residency clinical placement, "they don't see it as a class. They see it as 'I am paying you for me to come work for you.'" This same program director added that, in her experience, stipends signaled a seriousness of purpose and sense of professionalism to residents.

The second major role for stipends played out once residents began their placements: Stipends enabled residents' full participation in the clinical year. In easing the pressure to hold outside jobs, stipends opened up more time during residents' yearlong clinical placements, time that was important for candidates participating in a preparation model that was demanding by design. Exemplifying the relationship between stipends and residency participation, a TCLAS residency program completer shared how her paid residency placement enabled her to focus on her preparation experience, in contrast to another teacher who did not receive a stipend:

> I could definitely see difference between my experience versus hers. For her, she would do a full day for free and then she would still have to go home, finish any homework or assignments, and then she would also have to go to work. So, I felt really grateful that I didn't have to worry about that. I didn't have to worry about, "How am I going to pay my next bill? What shift do I need to pick up on top of classes and test prep?"

Faculty also recognized that working during the residency experience would affect residents' ability to fully participate in their clinical experiences. One EPP faculty member described the connection between stipends and the quality of residents' clinical experiences: "I knew we couldn't do a really robust, immersive, yearlong experience for our students without some way to … put stipends in the pockets, because the vast majority of students work." Seen from this perspective, residency stipends were more than a recruiting tool that eased residents' financial burdens; they were also an integral part of the residency model, enabling the high level of participation in the preparation experience, including classroom teaching and aligned coursework, envisioned for residents.

Other Factors in Resident Recruitment

In addition to residency stipends, we found other factors to be influential in resident recruiting. First among these factors is the challenging nature of residencies. Residents and program completers alike acknowledged that residencies are a demanding route to certification, while faculty articulated how the intensive nature of the residency experience plays into teacher candidates' decisions, particularly in comparison to other available pathways. As one EPP faculty member described prospective teachers' decision-making:

> The residency is a lot of work. And so, if you have all this work over here and you're better prepared, but then you have a quick answer over here, alt cert [alternative certification], and I could still be a teacher and maybe pay less money to do that—which one do you choose?

Residents also acknowledged that the residency model presented challenges even for those who had already made the choice to enroll. As one resident explained, "At the beginning, I was like, man, I just want to be there a semester. … Why are they making us go a full year?" Still, this resident came to see the residency experience as worthwhile despite its challenges. "Let's just say I'd rather be in this boat than in a boat where they just throw me into a classroom. I'd rather have a year under my belt."

Aside from the inherent challenge of the yearlong placement, undergraduate teacher candidates may also consider how participation in a residency program might shape their senior year of college. As an EPP faculty member explained, "These students really are taking a whole year. Their senior year. … They really have almost jumped in early to that career pool and are now working full time." While this prospect may not seem particularly troubling from a policymaker's perspective, these demanding programs affect the schedules and experiences of college seniors in ways that may factor into enrollment decisions. A coordinator for secondary programs at one EPP noted that the time required by residencies may particularly affect college athletes who aspire to both teach and coach at the middle and high school levels.

A final set of factors in residents' decisions may function less to inform recruiting efforts than to recognize that some factors will always be beyond the control of EPP and district staff looking to enroll residents and hire residency completers. As previous research has found, geography plays a role in where teachers decide to work, with many opting to teach close to their hometowns.[71] Geographic preferences may also affect decisions about where to accept a residency placement, or even whether to pursue one at all. If teacher candidates already know where they want to teach as they approach their senior year, they may find a residency in a different district to be less appealing.

Districts requiring postresidency service in order for a resident to receive a stipend—which is not a required TCLAS feature, but which has been a part of some residency partnerships—add an additional factor for candidates to consider. EPP faculty described patterns in residents' acceptance of clinical assignments that suggest that district-specific service requirements may reduce the appeal of those districts' residency programs. An EPP program director suggested that these requirements may seem limiting even to teacher candidates with no firm postgraduation plans:

> Now I do have one teacher candidate that chose not to get paid [a residency stipend] because part of the agreement is [if] you get paid, you have to teach for us for a year, the following year. And my teacher candidate said, "I don't know where I'm going to be at that time," so she decided not to.

Finally, geographic preferences may affect residents' retention in their placement schools and districts after program completion. One resident described her thought process regarding whether she would stay in her placement district after graduation: "If I were to move, it's nothing against the district because I would love to stay in the school that I'm in … but … my family's not from here. I moved here for school, so I would most likely go back home." The resident also explained that she was struggling with the decision. "Do I stay here? Because I really like it. I know the curriculum. … I have an understanding of what they're teaching, who they are, versus [going] home where my family is and [starting] all over." This and similar examples suggest that there will always be some residents with postresidency plans to move back home or elsewhere despite the efforts of EPPs and districts to retain residents after completion.

Overall, the variety of preferences and choices expressed by teacher candidates implies that there is no single approach to recruiting and retention that can appeal to all aspiring teachers, and there are no guarantees that local investments in recruiting and hiring will shape residents' decisions in desired directions. At the same time, a more nuanced picture of the factors that go into candidates' and residents' decision-making does suggest that EPPs and districts can make it a goal to help candidates and residents make informed decisions about preparation and employment.

TCLAS Strategic Staffing Technical Assistance

As described earlier, the goals of the TCLAS TA provisions were twofold. At the local level, TA was intended to enable TCLAS districts to sustain paid residencies after the end of state funding, keeping stipends at the $20,000 TCLAS level. At the state level, these provisions were meant to build a network of trained strategic staffing TA providers, working through the existing statewide network of regional Education Service Centers (ESCs). These ESCs built staff capacity to support TCLAS districts that could later be used to support additional districts in establishing paid residencies.

Priorities of Strategic Staffing Technical Assistance

As previously described, strategic staffing, also called innovative staffing, refers to district-level efforts to reconfigure how educator positions in schools—e.g., substitute teacher, tutor, and instructional aide positions—are funded and filled. This reconfiguration was meant to free up resources to sustain paid residency programs. More specifically, districts implementing strategic staffing strategies assigned residents to take on instructional support positions for time-limited periods, frequently 1 day per week. The money allocated for these positions could then be redirected toward supporting resident stipends.

Illustrating the strategic staffing concept further, a TCLAS TA provider provided an example of how districts engaged with the strategic staffing process:

> You can think differently about how to leverage residents. … Districts don't have extra money, so how are you using the money you already have? Well, [if I were] a building principal, I would much rather say, "I'm going to have these residents be my primary substitute teachers, and we're going to do it in a strategic way so it's not taking away from their teacher preparation." … [Or] I can use these strategic staffing models to think differently about who I go to first for before- and after-school tutoring or even before- and after-school care. … And I've already got that money. I don't have to find that money.

The reconfiguration of educator roles was a novel response to the problem of residency sustainability, and it brought with it some novel challenges. One such challenge, anticipated by TA providers, was that strategic staffing roles might end up demanding too much time and effort from residents. If their work supporting instruction was not kept within certain boundaries, it could end up detracting from residents' learning in their co-teaching placements. As one TA provider staff member noted:

> If we're not careful, I would say that the [strategic staffing] designing that's happening with the districts could turn a resident into a kind of intern, where they're being left alone to teach too much, or they're being asked to sub too often, or they're not getting the full benefits of

> the residency. I think it would be seeing [the system] in its entirety, from what's a high-quality residency, to how do we then provide strategic staffing models to support that, in addition to the pay, in addition to the district benefits. Seeing the alignment of all of that is critical.

US PREP, which was responsible for providing TA and training ESC staff who also would be providing TA to districts, aimed to keep the preparation front and center. The training US PREP staff provided to ESC fellows went far beyond the details of strategic staffing, digging into the fundamental elements of high-quality residencies and their purposes in the teacher pipeline. As one US PREP trainer of trainers explained:

> In my opinion, at their best, [the ESC TA providers] will have a strong understanding of the importance of the elements of a residency, [not just] the elements of a paid residency. … The whole point of this is that at the end, we [produce] highly trained and prepared teachers. If that's your foundation, everything else that happens builds off of that.

To accomplish this in-depth training, US PREP was able to bring both previous residency TA experience and firsthand knowledge as a TCLAS TA provider into ESC staff training, as described in the next section.

Communication, Innovation, and Technical Assistance

School and district administrators and EPP staff were consistent in their positive opinions of the TCLAS strategic staffing TA they received. Interviewees felt that the TA providers gathered the right personnel to make decisions about strategic staffing, as described in the previous section. They also expressed appreciation for the essential role TA providers played in convening and conducting these meetings. In setting up TCLAS TA structures, TA providers created opportunities for cross-partnership communication that might not have existed otherwise. As one district administrator explained:

> [The TA] has been really helpful … just [initiating] those type of meetings—you think you can do it, but I'm also doing 100 other things. So, when I have a technical assistance provider that sends dates and sets up the meeting, sets up the agenda, brings the materials, has the questions, has the talking points … it just really helps, basically, gear those conversations to be more intentional and to move forward.

EPP and district staff also appreciated that TA providers, working with multiple districts, could draw upon insights from across district contexts to contribute to local problem-solving. ESC fellows met regularly with their US PREP trainers and with ESC staff working in other regions. One ESC fellow noted that this collaboration enhanced TA provider capacity: "We meet as a team … to share those lessons learned, to talk about ideas. … This is how we build capacity." From the EPP perspective, an administrator described the process by which insights gained in the course of TA to one district were shared with other districts:

> I don't think we could have thought through all the intricacies of it without someone guiding us. … Every time you come up against a brick wall, we could ask, "So who else is coming up against this? How did they solve it?" And [the TA provider] would go out and say, "OK, I've talked to X, Y, and Z … and this is how they did it, and someone else did it like this, and another [district], they haven't figured it out yet, either." We could always draw from a network.

Communication and feedback were further enhanced by the dual role of US PREP, which acted both as a direct TA provider and as an ESC training provider. Training sessions included materials derived from previous TA experience and improved through cycles of feedback, and US PREP regularly updated its TA training materials. For example, after several rural districts collaborated with one another and with TA providers to address recruitment issues, US PREP incorporated the resulting strategies into materials for the next cohort of ESC fellows. As part of its training for ESC fellows, US PREP trainers also simulated TA meetings and shared insights from their own experiences providing TA to districts. One trainer reported that these sessions allowed fellows to ask questions such as, "Can you help me navigate how to get [a district] back on track if they start to go down the wrong road? What lessons learned can I take with me so that I don't have to repeat the same mistakes?" These sessions also allowed ESC fellows to gain experience in low-stakes environments as they practiced listening for common issues, answering questions, and addressing obstacles to strategic staffing implementation.

One additional insight about TA provided by US PREP staff and ESC fellows was their realization, over the course of TCLAS implementation, that capacity building at the ESC level was analogous to capacity building at the EPP or district level, and both were analogous to classroom teaching. One US PREP staff member described these parallels:

> Just like teaching, you know all the mistakes people—the kids—are going to make. You know the common errors, and you can plan for them. I think as somebody who has done the TA and then also coaches and trains people on the TA, it's really hard your first year. … It's like your first year of teaching. You don't know what's coming, and then you make mistakes, and they have ripple effects down the road. So as coaches we say, "This parameter, guys, has some holes in it. You need to go back and fix those." But often, in training the TA provider, they don't realize their own errors until they've made them.

That US PREP was able to quickly utilize insights like these, iterating on and improving on TA training in real time, had one additional, related benefit: It gave US PREP trainers the opportunity to model the very approach to data-driven continuous improvement that would be implemented, in part under the guidance of ESC fellows, in TCLAS district–EPP partnership and strategic staffing work.

Sustainability in Practice

Sustainability of paid residencies was built into the TCLAS residency grant model from the beginning. Still, findings suggest mixed results from the implementation of TCLAS sustainability features. While many districts were able to secure sustainable paid residency funding by the end of the grant, TCLAS sustainability strategies were not sufficient to guarantee the continuation of paid residencies at required stipend levels in all TCLAS districts. Put another way, TCLAS strategic staffing support did not enable all districts, in all settings, to meet intended residency sustainability goals.

On the positive side, TEA staff reported that a high proportion of TCLAS districts were continuing to fund paid residencies in the first year following the grant's conclusion, with an average resident stipend of $19,000. More specifically, 80% of districts reported to TEA that they were continuing stipend funding at levels of $10,000 or greater, with 56% reporting funding them at or above the TCLAS levels of $20,000.[72]

In interviews, district administrators shared a similar picture, with some reporting that they would be able to continue the $20,000 stipends via strategic staffing while others provided lower predictions for post-TCLAS stipends, ranging from $5,000 to $12,500 per resident.

Our research found that higher stipends were associated with larger districts in urban areas while lower stipends were associated with smaller districts in rural areas, with some of the latter predicting that they would have difficulty paying future residents at all without further state support. Regardless, districts generally remained dedicated to the TCLAS goal of residency sustainability through strategic staffing even as their capacities to do so varied.

While district capacity emerged as one factor in sustaining paid residencies, district engagement was another. From the beginning of TCLAS, the TEA emphasized that grant funding for paid residencies would end and that districts and their EPP partners were required, as a condition of TCLAS participation, to prepare for this eventuality. Still, interviewees shared that the end of TCLAS funding caused consternation among district administrators. An EPP staff member characterized the question of whether districts would achieve sustainability in funding as "the million-dollar question," the one that "everyone is asking." As they worked toward sustainability, districts and their EPP partners were having difficult conversations about the changes in structures and practices necessary to provide residents with stipends. As one EPP faculty member shared:

> We're all … trying to bounce ideas off of one another to see what works for everyone involved. And I think when you have those conversations, you're able to better see some of the constraints that hold the universities back and some of the constraints that hold the school districts back. Even among motivated districts, the question remains whether resident stipend funding at the same level as the TCLAS grant can be sustained.

A US PREP staff member, interviewed during the third year of the TCLAS grant, shared that she was hearing concerns "every week" that the stipend money "is going away." According to this staff member, a main driver of ongoing sustainability efforts has been district motivation:

> I think some people are more committed to being innovative in that regard than others. Some people say the funding is going to leave, [and] if the funding leaves, we don't know what we're going to do. You know, [other] people are saying this is the best practice, and we're committed to doing it. … It seems to me more so a matter of mindset with the people that are in decision-making seats in the district. Some people say, "Wow, that was really great. We're going to figure out how to continue that work. What does it look like? Look at our budget and take some funds from here and there and there and then sustain this." And some people say, "Well, those funds are ending and so, yeah, it was fun while it lasted, but now we won't be able to do it anymore."

Another EPP staff member described the situation at two rural school districts, both of which were committed to continuing their teacher residency programs:

> I think they're real proactive on making sure that it does continue. And I believe that they see the benefits … to their students, their teachers, the schools—you know, the structure of the school itself. … But it sounds like [in] the long term, keeping [the stipend] at that level … is going to be a struggle.

Still, even when such struggles emerged and solutions seemed far off, a TEA staff member credited districts' efforts to achieve the intentions of the TCLAS grant program, saying, "When they're designing their staffing models, they are looking at what is going to allow us to sustain stipends even after TCLAS is over. So they are designing with sustainable stipends in mind."

Some districts expanded their sustainability-focused efforts by going beyond strategic staffing strategies to identify and combine funds from other sources, even in the midst of notable budget challenges that were being reported across the state.[73] In interviews, district staff frequently mentioned "braiding"—combining funding from multiple federal, state, and local sources—as a mechanism for supporting the continuation of paid residencies. The same TEA staff member described districts' efforts when their own budgets were insufficient:

> [These districts] made a really conscious effort at the end of the spring semester to say, "OK, it looks like the model that we have right now is not going to be enough in and of itself to sustain the stipend amount that we want. So, what other models could we add to what we've already designed? Where else could we find funding? What other grant opportunities or local philanthropic funders can we work with to provide the stipends that we would want to give people?" Because again, districts see the value of residents, and they want to compensate people accordingly.

Looking across varied district contexts, the question of whether paid residency stipends were maintained at the intended level past the end of TCLAS funding was connected to multiple factors. These factors included district size, availability of resources, and levels of buy-in and commitment from district leadership. Even as TCLAS funding ended in 2024, districts were still applying for follow-on grant programs, forming new residency partnerships, and even implementing residencies without state funding, demonstrating their continuing motivation in varied ways. Taken together, these factors affecting paid residency sustainability can inform design features in future iterations of state support for residencies, as will be taken up in our recommendations.

Enabling Conditions for TCLAS Residency Program Uptake

In this section, we describe conditions that facilitated Texas COVID Learning Acceleration Supports (TCLAS) uptake. As used here, "uptake" means that districts and educator preparation programs (EPPs) have adopted the TCLAS residency system, demonstrated positive engagement in the process, and made investments of effort and resources that suggest they intend to sustain paid residency programs in line with TCLAS goals. Of the conditions that appeared to drive uptake, we highlight two perceived as particularly important: pre-TCLAS residency transformation efforts by EPPs designated as Vetted Teacher Residency providers and district experience with residencies during the course of TCLAS implementation.

Prior EPP Experience With Residencies

The TCLAS requirement that districts partner with Vetted Teacher Residency programs was an important element of grant design. According to a Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff member, having a sufficient number of EPP residency programs already in place in Texas was essential for the successful launch of TCLAS:

> We knew just from deep engagement with EPPs and our roles leading EPP continuous improvement efforts that … we had a number of programs across the state that were running residencies. And then I think doing that Vetted Teacher Residency application on the front end [allowed us] to know we have at least 15 programs. Looking at their geographical diversity and their production, we think that there are enough programs here to meaningfully serve multiple regions of the state. We really benefited in Texas from the grassroots movement across preparation programs to transform to residency models well in advance of us launching this TCLAS grant. If we didn't have confidence in the fact that there were residency programs in this state that could execute upon this grant, I don't know that we would have done it at statewide scale as we did.

A US PREP staff member expressed a similar sentiment about the importance of having EPP residency programs up and running at the start of TCLAS:

> I think something that was critical was having that vetted residency list in the very beginning … to make sure that they have the components that we're looking for, because that's really the foundation that we need to be able to build the paid residency upon.

Providing this foundation was the first set of TCLAS Vetted Teacher Residencies, approved in 2021, all of which had residency programs in place before TCLAS. In redesigning their traditional preparation programs and relaunching them as residencies, these EPPs had taken on a complex and demanding project. In the words of one US PREP staff member, the process required "totally [reimagining] the way they do teacher preparation at the EPP level."

When TCLAS was launched, these EPPs brought this experience with residency planning and implementation into their partnerships with districts. In other words, the first TCLAS-vetted EPPs were already committed to the residency model. As one district administrator described it, "Our partner EPP was already sold on residencies. … They were already in the [US PREP] coalition." An EPP administrator described what being "sold" on residencies looked like: "We saw how great the [residency pilot]

program was and how it was preparing teachers," which led them to ask, "How can we have some of our students not going through it?" When there was some pushback among the faculty, "The answer to that was … we're not going back. This is the way we do it now." This EPP went on to become one of the first of the Vetted Teacher Residency programs eligible for TCLAS partnerships.

EPP shifts in funding indicated EPP institutional commitment to pre-TCLAS residency adoption. As a US PREP staff member stated, "This is how you know an EPP is serious about it: when they start reallocating their own money." EPP and US PREP staff described the costs of residency transformation as substantial. According to one US PREP staff member, an EPP producing somewhere between 150 and 250 residents per year may be operated for an additional cost of around $100,000, but only if the program is "willing to get rid of some of its sacred cows," like "redundant EPP staff positions," to reallocate money for residency-specific expenses like site coordinator salaries.

Reallocation efforts could be demanding. One residency program leader noted that her program was "really creative in finding money" through a multiyear process of freeing up funds to pay for residency costs, which involved deferring technology purchases, applying savings from faculty turnover, and adding new student fees.

One potential district benefit of working with experienced, vetted EPPs was the enhancement of residency sustainability efforts. As a US PREP staff member explained, when working with EPPs that had "very established [residency] programs," districts gained confidence that residents could fulfill the instructional and support roles called for in strategic staffing models. This confidence aided districts in their planning:

> Schools know what they're going to get. … When the district knows that they're going to get a candidate who's well prepared and who's going to want to stay in their district, they can do some things while they're there for a full year, like substitute or tutor, or fill all the needs we have at schools.

It's not surprising that district and school leaders' decision-making might be influenced by their observations of EPP residents in practice. This connection does, however, indicate one way that EPP residency experience can have downstream effects on the workings of district–EPP partnerships. Furthermore, this influence is consistent with the TEA's initial intentions in implementing the Vetted Teacher Residency process to recruit established residencies for TCLAS, drawing on their experience and motivation to build the foundation for the grant program.

District Engagement in Residency Implementation

Like EPP experience, district buy-in and engagement were also foundational for TCLAS uptake and for the grant's goals of scaling and sustaining residencies. As one district leader stated, "The administration has to be 100% bought in … because if they don't believe in it … they're not going to do it right." Another district administrator described the importance of widespread buy-in, stating, "I think that all parties have to see the mutual benefit and know … that we're creating this phenomenal teaching pipeline for our

District buy-in and engagement were also foundational for TCLAS uptake and for the grant's goals of scaling and sustaining residencies.

district." Along similar lines, an EPP faculty member also explained that experience with the model was vital; a district or school "has to have seen the importance of funding the resident and they have to see the benefit they're getting on the other end of it."

Our analysis suggested that district leaders and administrators were eager participants in TCLAS residency partnerships and were motivated to continue supporting paid residencies post-TCLAS even in the face of a variety of challenges. We also found that this motivation changed over the run of the grant. While the TCLAS application process demonstrated an initial commitment by districts, motivation to sustain paid residencies was frequently ascribed to positive district- and school-level experiences hosting residents and hiring residency completers. District buy-in to the residency model inspired some to make changes to their recruiting and hiring systems to attract and retain residency-trained teachers. These changes were notable because they were district-initiated, and they went beyond the policy and structure changes required by TCLAS.

Resident Quality Informing District Buy-In

Interviews with superintendents, district staff, school-level administrators, and teachers revealed consistent enthusiasm for the TCLAS residency model. A district administrator, for example, emphatically asserted that:

> Decision-makers need to understand that this is the most effective and the most successful … way to train teachers. … If this becomes a norm through the state of Texas … we are stepping up the field of education 100%. For Texas, that would be freaking awesome.

Interviewees attributed their enthusiasm to the perceived quality of the residents and completers coming into their schools. As one district administrator conveyed:

> It's really a game changer to get these [teacher residents]. … Right now, we have 26 [or] 27 residents at this point, and most of those individuals [we] will end up hiring if we have space for them. And when you hire them, you don't get a first-year teacher. You get, really, a veteran teacher that has relationships with individuals on that campus, has relationships with the students. They understand the culture. They understand what the expectations are. It's really just a win-win on behalf of the school district, but also on behalf of the [residents]. … It's just really a great, great program.

School and district administrators also explained that, due to the quality of the residents being produced, they and their colleagues are motivated to engage with residency programs more deeply than with other types of preparation programs. As one explained:

> Not only are they getting coached, they're getting coached by the district. … Their supervising principal during their residency can really support them in their growth and ensure that the teacher or that resident is ready to go to the classroom the next year, because that's the whole goal. … The principal wants those residents … to stay on that campus. So, they're going to be really invested and ensure that that resident is growing to meet the needs of their students and … be a part of that community.

Along with praise for the preparation of residents and the performance of completers, interviewees also expressed their appreciation for the contributions residents were making in their mentor teachers' classrooms during their yearlong clinical experiences. In one example of this trend, an EPP residency program director described the instructional quality evident in a resident's 5th-grade classroom, in which 15 students saw dramatic progress in their reading levels over the course of her yearlong placement. "To go from reading at a kindergarten level to reading at an advanced level, [or] on grade level, in a single calendar year, is exceptional," the program director explained. When asked what caused the change, the mentor teacher told her, "I had another adult [the resident] in the classroom, and we were able to really apply some intensive remediation for these kids, and we got them caught up."

Several teachers and administrators expressed the belief that policymakers, given the opportunity to see the high quality of teacher candidates completing these programs, would respond with enthusiasm as well as financial support. One mentor teacher, for example, declared that legislative support would surely follow if legislators saw the program in action. "If they could just come in and see how powerful this program truly is," she stated, "they would be willing to fund it."

A final contributing factor to residency uptake was the advantage that residency programs offered in the teacher hiring process. For administrators seeking to hire residents prepared in their schools, the yearlong clinical placement provided unprecedented insight into these new educators' qualifications and abilities compared to administrators' knowledge of other job applicants. A district administrator described how hiring residents was a "transition from how we had always done things." As he said, "You know, you have a vacancy? You fill the vacancy. But now, instead of filling the vacancy, we're going to find someone that has demonstrated excellence with our students based on 2 or 3 years of assessment data."

It is notable that insights into the fit between residency completers and school communities went both ways. Residents applying for jobs in their placement districts knew much more about their potential employers than applicants pursuing the usual round of interviews. During their clinical placements, residents developed firsthand knowledge of the students, staff, curriculum, and culture of the schools where they were applying to work. The clinical placement, therefore, functioned both as a preparation pathway and as a yearlong interview, and this was the case for district and school administrators as well as for residents. Residency completers' understanding of how they "fit" with prospective employers may be a contributing factor in retention. This is a promising question for further study.

Changes to Districts' Recruiting and Hiring Practices

Changes in district recruiting and hiring practices also emerged as a tangible indicator of TCLAS uptake. Districts eager to retain their residents after graduation took deliberate steps to restructure their teacher recruiting and hiring practices, bringing them into alignment with residency calendars and residents' needs. These changes included shifting timelines for recruiting, adding outreach communications and events, and altering procedures and deadlines for employment offers.

For example, one large urban district initially struggled with residency completer hiring, causing administrators to question the return on investment from the TCLAS program. After two disappointing rounds of hiring, this district upended the status quo. District staff implemented early hiring decisions, provided residents with employment offer letters, and added new job fairs and placement events. The district also made other changes to human resources policy, most important among them hiring teacher

candidates as district employees during the residency year. This change provided residents with benefits during the yearlong clinical placement and allowed the hiring of residency completers at the second step of the salary scale.[74] After making these changes, district administrators reported that they successfully hired 100% of the residents who completed their placements in district schools in spring 2024.

Looking at similar developments across multiple districts, a technical assistance (TA) provider staff member described these new approaches to retaining residents as "intentional hiring." Paraphrasing administrators in the districts that she works with, she highlighted several of the recruitment strategies she had seen, including celebrations to mark the passing of certification exams and early offer letters, both of which sent a message from districts to residents: "We want to make sure that they're staying with us. … We want to make sure that they know that we want to hire them." The same individual also provided details on district placement events:

> When some of our districts hire, they do a big celebration, almost like a signing party. … And so they literally roll out the red carpet, like a real red carpet, and then they bring their classes that they are mentoring in, and they bring their parents, and they bring their family members, and they really create this big celebration of, "You are committing now to our district. We're so excited."

A former EPP site coordinator, now working as a TA provider, shared two contrasting examples that illustrated districts' motivation for investing time and effort into revising their hiring systems to retain residency completers. She worked with one district in which all the residents who had completed their placements took jobs at other districts after graduation. When she asked the residents why, they explained:

> None of them knew the district wanted to keep them. … Nobody at the district had said to them, "Hey, we want you to stay." … There were job fairs in February, so they went to job fairs. By the time the district was like, "Of course we want to hire them" in April, they all had signed letters of intent [elsewhere].

In contrast, she described a different district that had initiated changes to recruit their residents for future employment:

> At orientation with the residents and the teachers, they stood up and said, "Our goal is for every one of you to be our employees next year. … We want you to stay here. We want you to love your campus." … And they have reiterated that message over and over and over. And I bet you that a high percentage will stay. Because they tell them they want them.

Some districts set up processes for securing postresidency commitments even before specific teacher positions for the following year had become available. As a district administrator explained:

> We were so interested in trying to retain them that we came up with a letter of assurance for next year for a job. And we didn't have jobs, [we didn't have] vacancies! But we knew that it's inevitable that we're going to have a vacancy, and we don't want to let you go because you're just that top-notch. We want to retain you.

A staff member in a different district shared a similar description, laying out a set of complementary recruiting strategies: letters of intent, preferential hiring for open positions, and a bump in pay on the district's salary scale:

> We offer all of our teacher residents that are meeting expectations, in January, a letter of intent to hire. … If they're doing their part and we're doing our part, we give them a letter of intent that we will hire them. It may not be on the campus that they're currently at, but we will hire them in a teaching role. Throughout the year, if there's not a teaching role available, we'll hire them as a long-term substitute. … And then … we give them credit on their pay scale. So instead of starting out on zero years, they start on 1 year, so they get credit.

From the other side of the hiring process, TCLAS residents related that district efforts to recruit them were making an impression. Residents at multiple EPPs, all nearing the end of their yearlong clinical experiences, shared positive experiences with districts' recruiting efforts. "We've been told from the start that basically they're going to want you at your campus, for sure," one resident explained. "I have a great relationship with my principal, and she's already been asking me, 'Where are you going? Where are you thinking about?'" Another described district benefits she found impressive, explaining, "You also get paid as a second-year teacher, and if you're continuing your education to your master's degree, they'll pay for your master's degree."

So clear were their districts in communicating this desire to hire residency completers that the residents joked about district eagerness. One asked, rhetorically, "Can I graduate first?" If nothing else, this district seemed to have taken steps to avoid earlier district issues by conveying an openness to hiring the residents placed in their schools.

Recommendations for an Evolving Policy Context

The Texas COVID Learning Acceleration Supports (TCLAS) residency grant was launched to support high-quality, sustainable residency programs, enabling districts to build strong educator pipelines.[75] TCLAS represented a continuation of the state's initial work to support residencies. The infusion of federal COVID-19 relief funding expanded this work, enabling the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to seed residency partnerships across the state. The influx of resources and effort reshaped the TEA's agenda by creating a larger statewide residency infrastructure.

This study aimed to document TCLAS grant implementation, highlighting key levers of the program, its influence on school districts and educator preparation programs (EPPs) as they built and managed paid residency programs, and its implications for the future of residencies in Texas. More specifically, we examined how TCLAS facilitated the development of structures and practices for residency programs and partnerships, guided and supported practitioners in residency implementation, and provided sustainability-focused technical assistance (TA) to school districts and their EPP partners. We documented the experiences of educators, TA provider and Education Service Center (ESC) staff, and current and former residents to construct an understanding of their on-the-ground experiences with grant implementation. We also gathered information from state agency staff, district administrators, and EPP leaders who provided insight into the planning, administration, sustainability, and potential expansion of TCLAS residencies.

Although TCLAS funding for paid residencies has ended, this investment continues to shape the state's teacher workforce. TCLAS has also influenced state policy discussions, foregrounding questions about continuing support for, and potential expansion of, residency programs across the state. In this concluding section, we comment in brief on Texas's evolving state policy context. After that, we lay out our recommendations for state policy actions. These recommendations are directly relevant to state policymakers in Texas, though policymakers from other states with related teacher workforce goals may find ideas to carry into their own contexts.

The Evolving State Policy Context

As the TCLAS residency grant program was running, Texas policymakers were exploring and enacting policies to define, regulate, and support teacher residencies. For the most part, Texas has pursued a strategy focused on state agency and board actions, including grants and changes to administrative code. Additionally, after TCLAS ended, legislation passed in 2025 appropriated funding to support residency pathways and codified resident and mentor stipends. This 2025 legislation provided for dedicated funding to support clinical placements for residents, flowing initially to districts but eventually also to EPPs based on resident retention in Texas schools. This legislation offers possibilities beyond those available from administrative action, in large part through the legislature's power to appropriate state funds.

On the administrative side, the TEA implemented three grant programs, starting during TCLAS funding, to build on and expand residency support under TCLAS. These grant programs are still running as of the writing of this report. Also during the run of TCLAS, the TEA, in collaboration with two education-focused state boards, undertook a far-reaching revision of the Texas Administrative Code. Among other changes, this revision created a separate, officially recognized residency pathway and a state teaching certificate linked to this new pathway—the Enhanced Standard Certificate—for residency completers.

The first of the three TEA grant programs, the Texas Strategic Staffing Grant for Sustainable, Paid Teacher Residency Program, aims to expand the teacher residency model by prioritizing districts that did not receive TCLAS funding. It provides TA, along with financial support, for residency staff and for districts and charter schools as they partner with vetted EPPs to design and implement paid, yearlong teacher residencies. Unlike TCLAS, this grant does not fund resident stipends directly, though grantees do receive 2 years of TA from their regional ESCs to design and implement strategic staffing models for residency sustainability. As of this writing, the TEA has run three competitive rounds of this grant, allocating over $6 million to support residency program implementation in roughly 75 districts.[76]

In a second grant program, the TEA made funding directly available to regional ESCs to lead the TA efforts beyond TCLAS. Three cycles of grants, starting in 2022, have been offered, funding training for dedicated staff to provide TA to districts. The first grant cycle provided $575,000, supported by federal Title IIA funds, and the following two were each over $1 million, funded by the state. To strengthen four regional ESCs in the Houston and Dallas-Fort Worth areas as "state leads" in residency strategic staffing, the TEA committed an additional $640,000 for coaching and supporting ESC fellows working with districts on residency design and implementation.[77]

Finally, the Sustainable Residency Continuation Grant provided TCLAS-funded districts with an additional round of funding, and thus more time, for the implementation of strategic staffing models. Available only to districts that had completed the TCLAS design and implementation years, this $3.25 million grant drew from state funds. At the district level, the majority of grant funds were used to support resident stipends, supplementing districts' efforts to identify local funds as they continued to work through strategic staffing implementation.[78] District grantees were provided $25,000 in state funds per resident for up to 10 residents, with a district matching requirement of $3,500 per resident and $1,500 per mentor teacher. In effect, this grant helped TCLAS districts delay the end of state grant support while they refined their strategic staffing models to be self-sustaining. Sixteen districts seeking additional time to achieve TCLAS sustainability were awarded this grant, which ran through August 31, 2025.[79]

Changes to the Texas Administrative Code, also underway during the TCLAS grant cycle, were adopted in April 2024 by the Texas State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC). These changes created a formally recognized teacher residency preparation pathway leading to a new state teaching certificate, the Enhanced Standard Certificate. These changes codified many of the residency features required for TCLAS EPPs under the Vetted Teacher Residency process, and the development process for this new pathway was informed by feedback from vetted EPPs. After final approval by the State Board of Education, these revisions became effective in September 2024. The SBEC issued the first 15 program approvals in the Texas Teacher Residency Preparation Route in December 2024.[80]

Common threads running through state policy activities reflect a systematic approach aimed at supporting established residencies and further expanding their reach. TEA grants provided additional support for TCLAS districts while building ESC capacity to support residencies and establish residency programs in districts that had not participated in TCLAS. The formal establishment of

Common threads running through state policy activities reflect a systematic approach aimed at supporting established residencies and further expanding their reach.

the residency route and the addition of the Enhanced Standard Certificate also opened up new paths for progress by officially distinguishing residencies from other pathways. These distinctions could promote continued progress in supporting residencies by, for example, boosting efforts to assess the effects of residencies on the workforce using the state data system, or simplifying hiring processes for residency completers. These changes have already modified the state's EPP approval process to include program features associated with high-quality residency implementation, aligning state EPP review with operations of these new and growing pathways into the profession.

Recommendations

Our recommendations are informed by our findings from data collected in 2023 and 2024 and are presented in the context of the ongoing state policy activities described above. We also note ways in which the Texas experience with TCLAS can inform policy development in other states. These recommendations are built on our analysis of the implementation and implications of the TCLAS residency grant. They offer guidance, at both local and state levels, directed toward furthering the goals of TCLAS: establishing high-quality and sustainable teacher residency programs, aligning residencies to district contexts, building robust statewide teacher pipelines, reducing teacher attrition, and improving access to well-qualified teachers. The six recommendations are as follows:

1. **Continue to require key TCLAS features in future residency support efforts.** Essential features include research-based models with full-year placements in co-teaching settings; shared EPP–district governance structures enabling local flexibility, agency, and buy-in; and specified EPP and PreK–12 educator roles and responsibilities. In TA, the dual emphasis on direct TA and train-the-trainer roles for providers should be maintained, as should the collaborative, improvement-focused approach of the network of ESCs, which has already been operating across geographic and institutional boundaries.

   Texas policymakers have already begun incorporating these features into TCLAS follow-up residency grants and into regulations and statutes governing EPPs. The state should continue this consistent, comprehensive approach to building on past progress and lessons learned. For other states interested in establishing or expanding residencies, the incorporation of these key features as requirements could be a starting point as they build out their own priorities and goals.

2. **Facilitate residency expansion by developing new EPP partners and supporting longer implementation timelines for new residency partnerships.** TCLAS grant program implementation relied on previously established EPP residency programs and on engaged district uptake. EPPs initially vetted for TCLAS participation were able to draw on previous experience when implementing partnerships with districts. TCLAS districts benefitted from these required partnerships and, in some cases, their own pre-TCLAS residency experience, but their engagement was also driven by positive impressions of residents' performance during and after their training.

   Future state efforts to expand residencies should account for the time and effort required to develop residency infrastructure, partnerships, and buy-in, particularly for EPPs and districts with little or no residency experience. US PREP has demonstrated the time and effort required in pre-TCLAS iterations of residency transformation, in which EPPs and their district partners take 4 years to make the transition to fully operational residencies and often continue to refine their models beyond this

initial period. Taking into account the EPP residency redesign efforts that preceded the 2-year TCLAS residency implementation process suggests the potential need for longer runways when establishing sustainable paid residencies in new settings.

3. **Support the establishment of pipelines for mentor teachers and residency faculty as new programs come online and established programs continue to operate and grow.** Because both mentor teacher and EPP clinical faculty (site coordinators) were essential for TCLAS implementation, building intentionally designed pipelines for educators aspiring to these roles could support the further expansion of residencies. Although the center of effort in establishing these pipelines would be at the district level, state support could play an important role by funding collaborative planning and program rollout, similar to how the state has seeded and supported residencies.

   Establishing mentor and site coordinator pipelines could build on existing state efforts. This report has described the options that TCLAS provided for experienced teachers to take on new roles and responsibilities, but the governor's Teacher Vacancy Task Force recommendations also call for the state to "expand training and support for teacher mentorship and teacher leadership opportunities."[81] Should the state and districts embark on the building out of educator career ladders, these new systems could incorporate residency mentor teacher and site coordinator roles.

   Creating pipelines for residency mentors and site coordinators by integrating these roles into district career ladders would involve navigating some complexities at the intersection of PreK–12 and higher education. Establishing career ladder steps for mentor roles would be a district-level responsibility, though this could be done in collaboration with partner EPPs. Establishing steps for site coordinators or other clinical or classroom EPP faculty—roles now frequently filled by retired PreK–12 educators and administrators—would almost certainly require building shared staff structures between PreK–12 and institutions of higher education. This would present challenges, though close PreK–12/EPP collaboration is already underway through TCLAS partnerships, including through shared mentor selection and training and site coordinators' work across institutional settings and boundaries.

4. **Create multidistrict residency consortia to enable teacher pipeline collaboration, supported by expanded TA through ESCs.** Residency sustainability and scaling could be enhanced by creating cross-district collaboration structures, including regional residency consortia. In a region with multiple districts implementing residencies, a consortium could support local hiring for residency completers in an expanded geographic area. Specifically, a regional consortium could link smaller rural districts, with fewer teacher position openings each year, to larger districts with more residents and more yearly teacher vacancies.

   Creating regional flows of completers would expand hiring opportunities across districts and offer a new type of return on investment for districts that train residents who move on to other locations, provided that these residents stay within the region. A resident who leaves a consortium member district at the end of their residency placement might, for example, be more inclined to move to another consortium district than to leave the region altogether. For another example, districts with more residents than open positions could, by looking across the region, be able to offer more options to program completers within the same general geographic area.

Setting up regional consortia would require an expansion of connective structures across districts, but these could be built on TCLAS-supported technical assistance efforts already underway through ESCs. Because TCLAS TA training sessions brought together multiple districts and their EPP partners, they created informal connections and networks that could, with deliberate planning, be strengthened into formal consortia. In regions where EPPs and districts are already collaborating in educator preparation and placements, the establishment of residency consortia could enhance coordination across local teacher labor markets.[82]

5. **Support residency sustainability by offering matching grants and helping districts braid funding from multiple sources.** TCLAS sustainability provisions, using district funds redirected through strategic staffing, were not always sufficient to maintain paid residencies at TCLAS levels. The combination of grant requirements and TA support proved to be necessary for moving districts and their EPP partners toward resident stipend sustainability, but this progress did not entirely meet the goals laid out for TCLAS.

   Varied district circumstances have led to uneven progress toward sustainable paid residencies, suggesting that bridging the gap between districts' capacity and residency sustainability will require varied solutions. The state can support residency sustainability through a combination of approaches, including extending state funding of paid residency placements to give districts more time to achieve sustainability; offering matching grants to subsidize district residency stipends; and providing guidance and TA to support districts in braiding funding from multiple sources, including teacher apprenticeship funds. Some work on accessing and braiding funding from new sources is already underway in Texas as both the TEA and individual EPPs are seeking to apply federal teacher apprenticeships funding to residency models.[83]

6. **Provide targeted support for residency partnerships that prepare teachers for high-need assignments in rural and high-poverty districts.** Establishing and sustaining paid residencies in contexts in which economic and geographic barriers exacerbate shortages could be a powerful lever to support broader access to qualified teachers. Yet, it is in these same contexts that strategic staffing approaches appear insufficient to sustain paid residencies. Targeting financial support for residency stipends and other administrative costs to districts designated by the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA) would be a step toward addressing the teacher shortage in high-need areas. Targeted funds could also be directed toward additional time for districts to achieve residency sustainability.

   Such a move would have the advantage of building on previous state legislative action on teacher incentives while also aligning with future legislative proposals for supporting residencies. Using the TIA as a basis for directing funding to meet demonstrated needs for high-quality teachers would also connect to the original purposes of the TCLAS residency grant program. Targeted funds could also be directed toward other ongoing priorities for supporting residencies, such as providing more time and support for districts to achieve residency program sustainability.

Conclusion

The Texas COVID Learning Acceleration Supports (TCLAS) High-Quality, Sustainable Residencies Program has enabled the establishment and sustainment of residencies across the state of Texas. The program showed considerable progress toward its broader goals of expanding state and local pipelines for well-prepared teachers who are more likely to stay in the profession compared to those coming through other pathways. TCLAS has also prepared the ground for future state efforts to sustain and scale paid teacher residencies through administrative and legislative action.

Although the analysis and recommendations presented in this report are focused on Texas, they can also inform policy development in other states. Relevant lessons include building programs on research-based residency features, ensuring sufficient timelines for the adoption of new preparation models, and supporting educator preparation program (EPP) residency redesign as a precursor to establishing district partnerships. Related lessons include providing technical assistance opportunities that enhance EPP–district partnerships, promote program ownership and uptake, and allow sufficient time for districts to fully implement strategic staffing models to support residency sustainability. These recommendations point toward an approach to establishing and sustaining residencies that builds capacity, support, and ownership in districts and EPPs, enhancing state teacher pipelines through local partnerships.

Appendix: TCLAS Residency Grant Program Assurances

TCLAS Assurances—Decision 5—High-Quality, Sustainable Teacher Residencies

Applicant–EPP Partnership:

- ☐ The applicant must assure that they have a signed letter of commitment or an established memorandum of understanding (MOU) with an educator preparation program included on the 2021–2022 Vetted Teacher Residency Program list.
- ☐ The applicant must assure that they will hold structured governance meetings with their EPP partner at least three times annually to analyze teacher resident data and develop plans for teacher residency continuous improvement.
- ☐ The applicant must assure that they will provide preferential hiring, to the greatest extent possible, to teacher residents who have successfully completed the teacher residency program and received standard certification.
- ☐ The applicant must assure that they will report the following data to the TEA annually:
  - number of teacher residents participating in the yearlong teacher residency,
  - demographics of teacher residents participating in the program,
  - number and type of teacher certifications awarded to teacher residents, and
  - number of teacher residents hired as full-time teachers within the LEA the following year.
- ☐ The applicant commits to attending quarterly High-Quality, Sustainable Teacher Residency webinars in SY 2021–22.

Teacher Residency Program Structure:

- ☐ The applicant and EPP partner must assure that they will collaboratively develop a teacher resident profile, aligned with the applicant's educator pipeline needs, that they assure will be used to recruit, select, and place teacher residents.
- ☐ The applicant and EPP partner must assure that the teacher resident yearlong clinical teaching assignment is 1 academic year (28 weeks minimum) in length, with the teacher resident spending at least 3 days per week on the assigned campus under the supervision of the cooperating teacher.
- ☐ The applicant and EPP partner must assure that they will collaboratively develop a cooperating teacher profile, which includes consideration of the cooperating teacher's impact on student achievement, to recruit and select high-quality cooperating teachers.
- ☐ The applicant and EPP partner must assure that they will provide training and support in mentorship and co-teaching best practices for cooperating teachers.

- ☐ The applicant and EPP partner must assure that they will adhere to all educator preparation program requirements in the Texas Administrative Code (TAC).

Innovative Staffing Design and Implementation:

- ☐ The applicant must assure that a designated team of district, campus, and partner EPP–level leaders will actively participate in innovative staffing model training and technical assistance support activities beginning in SY 2022–2023. The designated team must include at least one district and EPP-level leader and a selected set of leaders from each campus on which teacher residents are placed.
- ☐ The applicant must assure that they will design and implement an innovative staffing model plan that will ensure that the teacher residency model will be sustainable, fully funded by district dollars, by SY 2024–2025. The plan must include sustainable funding for teacher resident stipends/salaries.

High-Quality, Sustainable Residency Funding:

- ☐ The applicant must assure that they will provide each teacher resident placed within the district a stipend of at least $20,000.
- ☐ The applicant must assure that they will allocate and use the residency and innovative staffing implementation funding specifically for program specific requirements.

Source: Reproduced from Texas Education Agency. (2021, August 4). *Texas COVID Learning Acceleration Supports (TCLAS) program*.

Endnotes

1. Texas Education Agency. (2021, January). *Sustainable teacher residencies in Texas* [Presentation slides]. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NwfxHLxlA4bm4R4vz7zNrTG8LXCr_RFY/view; Texas Education Agency. (2021, August 4). *Texas COVID Learning Acceleration Supports (TCLAS) program*. https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/health-safety-discipline/covid/tclas-guidance-document.pdf
2. Bland, J. A., Wojcikiewicz, S. K., Darling-Hammond, L., & Wei, W. (2023). *Strengthening pathways into the teaching profession in Texas: Challenges and opportunities*. Learning Policy Institute. https://doi.org/10.54300/957.902; McLoughlin, J., & Yoder, M. (2021, July 13). *TCLAS deep dive webinar: Decision 5: Residency program support* [Presentation slides]. Texas Education Agency. https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/covid/tclas-decision-point5-presentation-21.pdf
3. Texas Education Agency. (2024, March). *Teacher employment, attrition, and hiring* [Presentation slides]. Texas Education Agency. https://tea.texas.gov/texas-educators/superintendents/teacher-employment-attrition-and-hiring-march-2024.pdf
4. Bland, J. A., Wojcikiewicz, S. K., Darling-Hammond, L., & Wei, W. (2023). *Strengthening pathways into the teaching profession in Texas: Challenges and opportunities*. Learning Policy Institute. https://doi.org/10.54300/957.902; Templeton, T., Horn, C., Sands, S., Mairaj, F., Burnett, C., & Lowery, S. (2022). *2022 Texas teacher workforce report*. University of Houston. https://charlesbuttfdn.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Texas-Teacher-Workforce-Report-2022.pdf
5. Landa, J. B. (2024). *Employed teacher attrition and new hires 2014–15 through 2023–24*. Texas Education Agency. https://tea.texas.gov/reports-and-data/educator-data/employed-teacher-attrition-and-new-hires-2023-2024.pdf
6. Templeton, T., Horn, C., Sands, S., Mairaj, F., Burnett, C., & Lowery, S. (2022). *2022 Texas teacher workforce report*. University of Houston. https://charlesbuttfdn.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Texas-Teacher-Workforce-Report-2022.pdf
7. Carver-Thomas, D., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2017). *Teacher turnover: Why it matters and what we can do about it*. Learning Policy Institute. https://doi.org/10.54300/454.278; Podolsky, A., Kini, T., Bishop, J., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2016). *Solving the teacher shortage: How to attract and retain excellent educators*. Learning Policy Institute. https://doi.org/10.54300/262.960
8. Kirksey, J. J., & Gottlieb, J. J. (2024, April). *Teacher preparation in the wild west: The impact of fully online teacher preparation and uncertified teachers in Texas* [White paper]. Texas Tech University. Center for Innovative Research in Change, Leadership, and Education. https://hdl.handle.net/2346/97797; Marder, M., Rhodes, A., Marshall, J., Reyes, P., Alexander, C., Joshi, M., & Solis Rodriguez, J. (2022). *Texas educator preparation pathways study: Developing and sustaining the Texas educator workforce*. University of Texas at Austin and Educate Texas.
9. Bland, J. A., Wojcikiewicz, S. K., Darling-Hammond, L., & Wei, W. (2023). *Strengthening pathways into the teaching profession in Texas: Challenges and opportunities*. Learning Policy Institute. https://doi.org/10.54300/957.902
10. Learning Policy Institute analysis of data from U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.). *Title II reports: National teacher preparation data* for Texas for each academic year from 2012–13 to 2022–23. https://title2.ed.gov/Public/Home.aspx (accessed 07/29/2025).
11. Texas Education Agency. (n.d.). *Districts of innovation*. https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/district-initiatives/districts-of-innovation; Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts. (n.d.). *Texas public education*. https://comptroller.texas.gov/transparency/local/public-education.php
12. Kirksey, J. J. (2024, July). *Amid rising number of uncertified teachers, previous classroom experience proves vital in Texas* [White paper]. Texas Tech University Center for Innovative Research in Change, Leadership, and Education. https://hdl.handle.net/2346/98166
13. Texas Education Agency. (2024, March). *Teacher employment, attrition, and hiring* [Presentation slides]. https://tea.texas.gov/texas-educators/superintendents/teacher-employment-attrition-and-hiring-march-2024.pdf
14. Texas Education Agency. (2024, March). *Teacher employment, attrition, and hiring* [Presentation slides]. https://tea.texas.gov/texas-educators/superintendents/teacher-employment-attrition-and-hiring-march-2024.pdf
15. Horn, C., Burnett, C., Lowery, S., & White, C. (2021). *Texas teacher workforce report*. University of Houston. https://www.uh.edu/education/research/institutes-centers/erc/reports-publications/ryht-report-20211.pdf
16. Guha, R., Hyler, M. E., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2016). *The teacher residency: An innovative model for preparing teachers*. Learning Policy Institute. https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/teacher-residency

17. Guha, R., Hyler, M. E., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2016). *The teacher residency: An innovative model for preparing teachers*. Learning Policy Institute. https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/teacher-residency

18. Bastian, K. C., & Crittenden Fuller, S. (2024, January). *Assessing teacher candidate characteristics, clinical placement practices, and employment outcomes for the US PREP Transformed Model: Initial results for teacher preparation programs in Texas*. Education Policy Initiative at Carolina. https://epic.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1268/2024/01/USPREP_transformed_model_initial_results.pdf; Kirksey, J. J. (2024). *Building a stronger teacher workforce: Insights from studies on Texas teacher preparation*. Texas Tech University College of Education. https://hdl.handle.net/2346/99592

19. Saunders, R., Fitz, J., DiNapoli, M. A., Jr., & Kini, T. (2024). *Teacher residencies: State and federal policy to support comprehensive teacher preparation*. Learning Policy Institute and EdPrepLab. https://doi.org/10.54300/358.825; Taie, S., & Lewis, L. (2023). *Teacher attrition and mobility: Results from the 2021–22 Teacher Follow-Up Survey to the National Teacher and Principal Survey* [NCES 2024-039]. National Center for Education Statistics. https://nces.ed.gov/use-work/resource-library/report/first-look-ed-tab/teacher-attrition-and-mobility-results-2021-22-teacher-follow-survey-national-teacher-and-principal

20. Saunders, R., Fitz, J., DiNapoli, M. A., Jr., & Kini, T. (2024). *Teacher residencies: State and federal policy to support comprehensive teacher preparation*. Learning Policy Institute and EdPrepLab. https://doi.org/10.54300/358.825

21. Bastian, K., & Fuller, S. C. (2024, January). *Assessing teacher candidate characteristics, clinical placement practices, and employment outcomes for the US PREP transformed model: Initial results for teacher preparation programs in Texas*. Education Policy Initiative at Carolina. https://epic.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1268/2024/01/USPREP_transformed_model_initial_results.pdf

22. Guha, R., Hyler, M. E., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2016). *The teacher residency: An innovative model for preparing teachers*. Learning Policy Institute. https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/teacher-residency; Kirksey, J. J. (2024). *Building a stronger teacher workforce: Insights from studies on Texas teacher preparation*. Texas Tech University College of Education. https://hdl.handle.net/2346/99592; Saunders, R., Fitz, J., DiNapoli, M. A., Jr., & Kini, T. (2024). *Teacher residencies: State and federal policy to support comprehensive teacher preparation*. Learning Policy Institute and EdPrepLab. https://doi.org/10.54300/358.825

23. Saunders, R., Fitz, J., DiNapoli, M. A., Jr., & Kini, T. (2024). *Teacher residencies: State and federal policy to support comprehensive teacher preparation*. Learning Policy Institute and EdPrepLab. https://doi.org/10.54300/358.825

24. Saunders, R., Fitz, J., DiNapoli, M. A., Jr., & Kini, T. (2024). *Teacher residencies: State and federal policy to support comprehensive teacher preparation*. Learning Policy Institute and EdPrepLab. https://doi.org/10.54300/358.825

25. Texas Education Agency. (2024). *Teacher Incentive Allotment: Program overview*. https://tiatexas.org/about/what-is-tia/

26. Texas Education Agency. (2024). *The Effective Preparation Framework*. https://epf.tea.texas.gov/framework (accessed 09/06/2024); Texas Education Agency. (2024). *High-quality educator preparation and support*. https://epf.tea.texas.gov/homepage (accessed 09/06/2024).

27. Cave, T. (2023, September 29). *SBEC considers changes to rules governing educator preparation programs*. Teach the Vote. https://teachthevote.atpe.org/Our-Blog/Latest-Posts/SBEC-considers-Educator-Prep-Program-rule-changes; Texas State Board for Educator Certification. (2024). *"10. Adoption of repeal of 19 TAC Chapter 228, Requirements for educator preparation programs, and new 19 TAC Chapter 228, Requirements for educator preparation programs."* In *Discussion and action meeting agenda February 16, 2024*. Texas Education Agency. https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/leadership/state-board-for-educator-certification/sbec-meetings/sbec-2024/sbec-april-2024/april26agendaitem4.pdf; Texas State Board for Educator Certification. (2023). *"14. Discussion and action related to implementation of the Effective Preparation Framework."* In *Minutes for July 21, 2023*. Texas Education Agency. https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/leadership/state-board-for-educator-certification/sbec-meetings/sbec-2023/sbec-september-2023/sept23agendaitem5.pdf; Texas State Board for Educator Certification. (2023). *"15. Effective Preparation Framework implementation update discussion."* In *Minutes for September 29, 2023*. Texas Education Agency. https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/leadership/state-board-for-educator-certification/sbec-meetings/sbec-2023/sbec-december-2023/dec23agendaitem4.pdf

28. Teacher Vacancy Task Force. (2023). *Developing a thriving teacher workforce in Texas: Final report executive summary*. Texas Education Agency. https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/health-safety-discipline/tvtf-final-report-executive-summary.pdf

29. General Appropriations Act, S.B. 1, 87th Legislature, 2021 Reg. Sess. (Tex. 2021). https://legiscan.com/TX/bill/SB1/2021; H.B. 1525, 87th Legislature, 2021 Reg. Sess. (Tex. 2021). https://legiscan.com/TX/text/HB1525/id/2408380; Texas Education Agency. (2021, June). *Texas COVID Accelerated Learning Supports (TCLAS) 6.24.21 Superintendent call* [Presentation slides]. https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/health-safety-discipline/covid/tclas.pdf

30. McLoughlin, J., & Yoder, M. (2022, January 13). *Sustainable teacher residencies in Texas* [Presentation slides]. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NwfxHLxIA4bm4R4vz7zNrTG8LXCr_RFY/view

31. McLoughlin, J., & Yoder, M. (2021, July 13). *TCLAS deep dive webinar: Decision 5: Residency program support* [Presentation slides]. Texas Education Agency. https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/covid/tclas-decision-point5-presentation-21.pdf; Texas Education Agency. (2023). *Statewide Texas Teacher Residency Programs and Practices* [Interactive map] https://tss.tea.texas.gov/residency-programs-dashboard

32. McLoughlin, J., & Yoder, M. (2022, January 13). *Sustainable teacher residencies in Texas* [Presentation slides]. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NwfxHLxIA4bm4R4vz7zNrTG8LXCr_RFY/view

33. Texas Education Agency. (2021, August 4). *Texas COVID Learning Acceleration Supports (TCLAS) program*. https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/health-safety-discipline/covid/tclas-guidance-document.pdf

34. McLoughlin, J., & Yoder, M. (2021, July 13). *TCLAS deep dive webinar: Decision 5: Residency program support* [Presentation slides]. Texas Education Agency. https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/covid/tclas-decision-point5-presentation-21.pdf

35. Texas Education Agency. (2021, August 4). *Texas COVID Learning Acceleration Supports (TCLAS) program*. https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/health-safety-discipline/covid/tclas-guidance-document.pdf

36. McLoughlin, J., & Yoder, M. (2021, July 13). *TCLAS deep dive webinar: Decision 5: Residency program support* [Presentation slides]. Texas Education Agency. https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/covid/tclas-decision-point5-presentation-21.pdf

37. McLoughlin, J. (2021, December 28). *Educator residencies and innovative staffing models* [Presentation slides]. Texas Education Agency. https://www.sfasu.edu/docs/college-education/meetings/TEA-educator-residencies-and-staffing-models.pdf

38. McLoughlin, J. (2021, December 28). *Educator residencies and innovative staffing models* [Presentation slides]. Texas Education Agency. https://www.sfasu.edu/docs/college-education/meetings/TEA-educator-residencies-and-staffing-models.pdf

39. McLoughlin, J., & Yoder, M. (2021, July 13). *TCLAS deep dive webinar: Decision 5: Residency program support* [Presentation slides]. Texas Education Agency. https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/covid/tclas-decision-point5-presentation-21.pdf

40. McLoughlin, J., & Yoder, M. (2021, July 13). *TCLAS deep dive webinar: Decision 5: Residency program support* [Presentation slides]. Texas Education Agency. https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/covid/tclas-decision-point5-presentation-21.pdf

41. Texas Education Agency. (2021, August 4). *Texas COVID Learning Acceleration Supports (TCLAS) program*. https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/health-safety-discipline/covid/tclas-guidance-document.pdf

42. McLoughlin, J., & Yoder, M. (2021, July 13). *TCLAS deep dive webinar: Decision 5: Residency program support* [Presentation slides]. Texas Education Agency. https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/covid/tclas-decision-point5-presentation-21.pdf

43. Texas Education Agency. (2023). *2023–2025 Grow Your Own grant program, cycle 6*. https://tea.texas.gov/finance-and-grants/grants/grants-administration/grants-awarded/competitive-grant-application/2023-2025-grow-your-own-grant-program-cycle-6

44. Texas Education Agency. (2023). *Vetted Teacher Residency Program list: 2023–24*. https://tea.texas.gov/texas-educators/preparation-and-continuing-education/program-provider-resources/vtrp-list-23-24.pdf

45. Texas Education Agency. (2021, May 18). *Texas Educator Preparation Programs newsletter*. https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/TXTEA/bulletins/2d9856e?reqfrom=share

46. Out of 120 approved EPPs in Texas (2023–24) and 74 traditional IHEs. Texas Education Agency. (n.d.). *Educator preparation programs in Texas* [Interactive map]. https://tea-texas.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/8fdeed6e29b741ba8bac151ac023186d

47. Texas Education Agency. (2024). *Statewide Texas teacher residency programs and practices* [Interactive map]. https://tss.tea.texas.gov/residency-programs-dashboard; Texas Education Agency. (2023). *Vetted Teacher Residency Program list: 2023–24*. https://tea.texas.gov/texas-educators/preparation-and-continuing-education/program-provider-resources/vtrp-list-23-24.pdf

48. McLoughlin, J., & Yoder, M. (2022, January 13). *Sustainable teacher residencies in Texas* [Presentation slides]. Texas Education Agency. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NwfxHLxIA4bm4R4vz7zNrTG8LXCr_RFY/view

49. McLoughlin, J., & Yoder, M. (2022, January 13). *Sustainable teacher residencies in Texas* [Presentation slides]. Texas Education Agency. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NwfxHLxIA4bm4R4vz7zNrTG8LXCr_RFY/view

50. McLoughlin, J. (2021, December 28). *Educator residencies and innovative staffing models* [Presentation slides]. Texas Education Agency. https://www.sfasu.edu/docs/college-education/meetings/TEA-educator-residencies-and-staffing-models.pdf

51. Texas Education Agency. (2021, August 4). *Texas COVID Learning Acceleration Supports (TCLAS) program*. https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/health-safety-discipline/covid/tclas-guidance-document.pdf

52. McLoughlin, J. (2021, December 28). *Educator residencies and innovative staffing models* [Presentation slides]. Texas Education Agency. https://www.sfasu.edu/docs/college-education/meetings/TEA-educator-residencies-and-staffing-models.pdf

53. McLoughlin, J. (2021, December 28). *Educator residencies and innovative staffing models* [Presentation slides]. Texas Education Agency. https://www.sfasu.edu/docs/college-education/meetings/TEA-educator-residencies-and-staffing-models.pdf

54. McLoughlin, J. (2021, December 28). *Educator residencies and innovative staffing models* [Presentation slides]. Texas Education Agency. https://www.sfasu.edu/docs/college-education/meetings/TEA-educator-residencies-and-staffing-models.pdf

55. McLoughlin, J. (2021, December 28). *Educator residencies and innovative staffing models* [Presentation slides]. Texas Education Agency. https://www.sfasu.edu/docs/college-education/meetings/TEA-educator-residencies-and-staffing-models.pdf

56. McLoughlin, J., & Yoder, M. (2022, January 13). *Sustainable teacher residencies in Texas* [Presentation slides]. Texas Education Agency. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NwfxHLxIA4bm4R4vz7zNrTG8LXCr_RFY/view

57. Texas Education Agency. (2021, August 4). *Texas COVID Learning Acceleration Supports (TCLAS) program*. https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/health-safety-discipline/covid/tclas-guidance-document.pdf

58. McLoughlin, J. (2021, December 28). *Educator residencies and innovative staffing models* [Presentation slides]. Texas Education Agency. https://www.sfasu.edu/docs/college-education/meetings/TEA-educator-residencies-and-staffing-models.pdf

59. Texas Education Agency. (2021, August 4). *Texas COVID Learning Acceleration Supports (TCLAS) program*. https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/health-safety-discipline/covid/tclas-guidance-document.pdf

60. McLoughlin, J., & Yoder, M. (2021, July 13). *TCLAS deep dive webinar: Decision 5: Residency program support* [Presentation slides]. Texas Education Agency. https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/covid/tclas-decision-point5-presentation-21.pdf

61. Texas Education Agency. (n.d.). *Education Service Centers*. https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/other-services/education-service-centers

62. Texas Education Agency. (n.d.). *Education Service Centers*. https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/other-services/education-service-centers

63. McLoughlin, J., & Yoder, M. (2022, January 13). *Sustainable teacher residencies in Texas* [Presentation slides]. Texas Education Agency. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NwfxHLxIA4bm4R4vz7zNrTG8LXCr_RFY/view

64. Texas Education Agency. (2021, August 13). *The Texas COVID Learning Acceleration Supports (TCLAS) program: Frequently asked questions*. https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/health-safety-discipline/covid/tclas-faq.pdf

65. Texas Education Agency. (2021, August 13). *The Texas COVID Learning Acceleration Supports (TCLAS) program: Frequently asked questions*. https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/health-safety-discipline/covid/tclas-faq.pdf

66. US PREP. (2022). *Scaling the site coordinator role*. https://irp.cdn-website.com/30f69313/files/uploaded/USPREP-Scaling-the-SC-Role-Case-Studies-2022.pdf

67. US PREP. (2022). *Scaling the site coordinator role*. https://irp.cdn-website.com/30f69313/files/uploaded/USPREP-Scaling-the-SC-Role-Case-Studies-2022.pdf

68. US PREP. (2022). *Scaling the site coordinator role*. https://irp.cdn-website.com/30f69313/files/uploaded/USPREP-Scaling-the-SC-Role-Case-Studies-2022.pdf

69. Texas Education Agency. (2021, August 4). *Texas COVID Learning Acceleration Supports (TCLAS) program*. https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/health-safety-discipline/covid/tclas-guidance-document.pdf

70. McLoughlin, J., & Yoder, M. (2021, July 13). *TCLAS deep dive webinar: Decision 5: Residency program support* [Presentation slides]. Texas Education Agency. https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/covid/tclas-decision-point5-presentation-21.pdf

71. Boyd, D., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2005). The draw of home: How teachers' preferences for proximity disadvantage urban schools. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, *8*(1), 113–132. https://doi.org/10.1002/pam.20072; Engel, M., & Cannata, M. (2015). Localism and teacher labor markets: How geography and decision making may contribute to inequality. *Peabody Journal of Education*, *90*(1), 84–92. http://www.jstor.org/stable/43909814; Kurtz, H. (2014, February 28). For teacher job applicants, study finds it's all about location, location, location. *EducationWeek*. https://www.edweek.org/leadership/for-teacher-job-applicants-study-finds-its-all-about-location-location-location/2014/02; Reininger, M. (2012). Hometown disadvantage? It depends on where you're from: Teachers' location preferences and the implication for staffing schools. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *34*(2), 127–145. https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373711420864

72. Personal correspondence with Melissa Yoder, Director, Quality Preparation and Staffing, Texas Education Agency (2024, November 21).

73. Richman, T., & Fronczek, M. (2024, October 3). These 8 charts explain what's straining Texas school budgets. *The Dallas Morning News*. https://www.dallasnews.com/news/education/2024/10/03/these-7-charts-help-explain-whats-straining-texas-school-budgets/

74. Camarena, E., & Jenkins, T. (2024, March 28). *Three E's of strategic recruitment: Expectations, engagement, and events* [Presentation slides]. US PREP. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XiQdwPzibwB-mFgXiIon9E5TrHRQyRwW/view

75. McLoughlin, J., & Yoder, M. (2021, July 13). *TCLAS deep dive webinar: Decision 5: Residency program support* [Presentation slides]. Texas Education Agency. https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/covid/tclas-decision-point5-presentation-21.pdf

76. Texas Education Agency. (n.d.). *2023–2025 Texas Strategic Staffing Grant for Sustainable, Paid Teacher Residency Program*. https://tea.texas.gov/finance-and-grants/grants/grants-administration/grants-awarded/2023-2025-texas-strategic-staffing-grant-for-sustainable-paid-teacher-residency-program; Texas Education Agency. (n.d.). *2024–2026 Texas Strategic Staffing Grant for Sustainable, Paid Teacher Residency Program*. https://tea.texas.gov/finance-and-grants/grants/grants-administration/grants-awarded/2024-2026-texas-strategic-staffing-grant/2024-2026-texas-strategic-staffing-grant-for-sustainable-paid-teacher-residency-program; Texas Education Agency. (2024). *2025–2027 Texas Strategic Staffing Grant for Sustainable, Paid Teacher Residency Program*. https://tea4avcastro.tea.state.tx.us/eGrants/25-26/25029102/proguider1.pdf

77. Texas Education Agency. (2024). *Program guidelines: 2024–2025 Texas Strategic Staffing State Leads*. https://tea4avcastro.tea.state.tx.us/eGrants/24-25/25029108/proguide.pdf

78. Texas Education Agency. (2024). *Program guidelines: 2024–2025 Sustainable Residency Continuation Grant*. https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1718028958/csisdorg/ckbrs5fsqgvyfsdcuawc/proguider2.pdf

79. Texas Education Agency. (n.d.). *2024–2025 Sustainable Residency Continuation Grant*. https://tea.texas.gov/finance-and-grants/grants/grants-administration/grants-awarded/2024-2025-sustainable-residency-continuation/2024-2025-sustainable-residency-continuation-grant

80. Texas Education Agency. (2024, December 11). *Texas educator preparation programs newsletter: December 11, 2024*. https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/TXTEA/bulletins/3c65b7e

81. McLoughlin, J., & Yoder, M. (2021, July 13). *TCLAS deep dive webinar: Decision 5: Residency program support* [Presentation slides]. Texas Education Agency. https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/covid/tclas-decision-point5-presentation-21.pdf; Teacher Vacancy Task Force. (2023). *Developing a thriving teacher workforce in Texas: Final report executive summary*. Texas Education Agency. https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/health-safety-discipline/tvtf-final-report-executive-summary.pdf

82. Bland, J., Ralph, K., Wei, W., Wang, V., Wojcikiewicz, S. K., & Wechsler, M. E. (Forthcoming). *Preparing a high-quality teacher workforce: Lessons from Texas teacher education programs*.

83. Sloan, C. (2024, September 17). *Tarleton State University is now a Department of Labor recognized Teacher Apprenticeship provider. We will pilot this program in 2025* [LinkedIn page]. LinkedIn. https://www.linkedin.com/posts/chris-sloan-4769a784_tarleton-state-university-is-now-a-department-activity-7241770316790693889-Ukf4

About the Authors

Steven K. Wojcikiewicz is a Senior Researcher and Policy Advisor at the Learning Policy Institute (LPI). His work focuses on educator preparation and workforce development. He is a co-author of the books *Preparing Teachers for Deeper Learning* and *Preparing Leaders for Deeper Learning*. Wojcikiewicz has served as a high school teacher, an experiential educator, and a teacher education professor. He has also worked in policy roles at the American Federation of Teachers in Washington, DC, and at Deans for Impact in Austin, TX. Prior to joining LPI, he was Director of the Pacific Alliance for Catholic Education and a faculty member in the School of Education at the University of Portland in Oregon. Wojcikiewicz has a PhD in Educational Psychology and Educational Technology from Michigan State University, an MA in Teaching from the University of Portland, and a BA in History and Economics from the University of Notre Dame.

Kimberlee Ralph is a former Research and Policy Associate at LPI and was recently Chief of Staff for a member of the Texas House of Representatives. She is currently a project manager at MoakCasey specializing in education policy. Her research at LPI focused on addressing teacher preparation and retention through qualitative policy analysis at the state and federal levels, through a lens of racial equity. Prior to joining LPI, Ralph worked as an analyst in the office of a Texas state legislator and as a graduate research assistant. Before transitioning to policy, she was a public school literacy teacher and coach for nearly a decade, serving communities in Texas and Colorado. Ralph holds an MEd in Education Leadership and Policy from the University of Texas at Austin and a BS in Education from Southwestern University.

Jon Snyder is a Senior Research Fellow at LPI. He has written extensively on issues related to teacher preparation practice and policy. Snyder retired as the Executive Director of the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education in October 2020. He has also worked as a researcher and a teacher/educator at Teachers College; the National Center for the Restructuring of Education, Schools, and Teaching; the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future; and the University of California, Santa Barbara; and as Chief Academic Officer and Dean of the College at Bank Street College of Education. He began his career as a primary grades schoolteacher in Vancouver, WA. He has also worked in curriculum development and as a staff developer. He remains engaged in researching teacher learning, conditions that support teacher learning, and the relationships between teacher and student learning. Snyder received his doctorate from Teachers College, Columbia University.

Jennifer A. Bland is a Senior Researcher at LPI. She leads studies on teacher development and the teacher labor market in Texas. Over the course of her career, Bland has also conducted extensive research on teacher induction; teacher professional development and support; and teacher evaluation and compensation, among other topics. Before joining LPI, Bland worked as an education researcher at SRI International's Center for Education Policy and subsequently as an independent consultant. Bland received an MA in Education Policy, Organization, and Leadership Studies from the Stanford Graduate School of Education and a BA in Political Science from Stanford University.

Marjorie E. Wechsler is a Principal Research Manager at LPI. She leads mixed-methods research studies related to teacher and leader quality and early childhood learning. Her work at LPI focuses on supporting and documenting systems change to advance equity. Wechsler has co-authored several books related to educator development, including *Preparing Leaders for Deeper Learning* and *Developing Expert Principals: Professional Learning That Matters*. She also co-authored *Disrupting Disruption: The Steady Work of Transforming Schools* and *On the Road to High-Quality Early Learning: Changing Children's Lives*. Wechsler received her PhD in Education Administration and Policy Analysis from Stanford University, a MEd in Education Policy from Harvard University, and a teaching credential and BA in Psychology from Brandeis University.

1530 Page Mill Road, Suite 250
Palo Alto, CA 94304
p: 650.332.9797

1100 17th Street, NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20036
p: 202.830.0079

learningpolicyinstitute.org

The Learning Policy Institute conducts and communicates independent, high-quality research to improve education policy and practice. Working with policymakers, researchers, educators, community groups, and others, the Institute seeks to advance evidence-based policies that support empowering and equitable learning for each and every child. Nonprofit and nonpartisan, the Institute connects policymakers and stakeholders at the local, state, and federal levels with the evidence, ideas, and actions needed to strengthen the education system from preschool through college and career readiness.