



# Meeting Urban and Rural District Needs for Educators

California State University, Bakersfield's  
Teacher Residencies

Julie Fitz and Cathy Yun

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# Executive Summary

With a decade of experience in creating and running teacher residencies—numbering seven around the region as of 2024—California State University, Bakersfield (CSUB) and its partners have developed strong residency structures that allow for the variations that different communities need. We studied two of the university’s residency programs: one focused on preparing teachers to work in an urban district in the large city of Bakersfield and one focused on preparing teachers to work in rural districts within Tulare County, a region located between Fresno and the Sierra Nevada.

The university, located in the southern part of California’s Central Valley, launched its first residency program in 2014 and has continuously operated teacher residencies ever since. As a result, the university houses substantive institutional knowledge on the design and operation of effective residency programs, which it has gained through years of experience and extensive, ongoing guidance from technical assistance providers such as the National Center for Teacher Residencies and WestEd. All of the university’s teacher residencies partner with one or more local education agencies (LEAs), and they work closely with their LEA partner(s) to tailor preparation in accordance with localized staffing needs and collaboratively determined priorities.

Through our research, we found that CSUB residencies represent high-quality preparation options. Across the seven residencies, residents gave their programs high ratings, with an average of 4.3 out of 5.0 overall on the 2021 California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) completer survey. The individual residencies studied in this report prepare candidates who are hired and retained at high rates within partner districts and who tend to be more diverse than California’s general teacher population.

In this report, we present case studies conducted in 2023 of two CSUB residencies: the Kern Urban Teacher Residency (Kern Urban) and the Teacher Residency for Rural Education (TRRE). Kern Urban, established in 2016, is CSUB’s longest-running residency program and partners with a single urban school district, Bakersfield City School District (BCSD). As of 2022, Kern Urban has graduated a total of 114 residents, 92% of whom have continued to work in BCSD. TRRE, in contrast, hosted its first cohort in 2020 and prepares residents to teach in a specifically rural context. For this residency, CSUB partnered with the Tulare County Office of Education (TCOE), which facilitated placements in three rural districts during the 2022–23 academic year.

Within similar structures, the two programs’ differences, shaped by their contrasting contexts, illustrate how the residency model can be modified to meet the needs of both large urban and small rural districts.

## Case Study Methods

The case studies presented in this report are guided by the overarching question “How do successful residencies do their work?” They are part of a larger multiple case study of five California teacher residency programs across four different institutions of higher education. The goal of these case studies is to document the details of their program infrastructure; program design; recruitment strategies; resident, mentor teacher, and graduate supports; partnerships; leadership; and financial sustainability. By understanding the details of how these residencies develop and operate their programming, we are able to share insights that can inform the design and continuous improvement of residency programs across the country.

## Overview of Residency Features

**Institutional Support.** CSUB's suite of teacher residency pathways has developed, in part, due to a supportive institutional climate. The residencies at CSUB were viewed as essential to the institution's teacher preparation approach rather than as "add-on" or "special" programming. Educator preparation program (EPP) leadership valued the multiple residency programs, coupled with traditional and internship pathways, for providing prospective teachers with many options for acquiring their credentials and entering teaching.

The EPP helped support and promote cohesion across its seven residency programs through the creation of the CSUB Residency Consortium. The Consortium is a professional learning community that brought together on a monthly basis all of the university's residency coordinators—the faculty members who managed each residency's day-to-day operations. In addition to supporting alignment across programs, it allowed for residency coordinators to share successful practices, exchange ideas, and support each other through challenges.

**Program Design.** During the 2022–23 academic year, both Kern Urban and TRRE carefully aligned coursework with residents' clinical practice and incorporated the unique contexts of the districts where residents were placed and where they were likely to teach. Although all CSUB residencies share a standard set of course requirements for all Multiple Subject and Single Subject credentialing pathways, each residency had residency-specific course sections that were only open to the program's residents. This design allowed programs to create highly collaborative residency cohorts and cluster in-person coursework on a single day of the week when residents were not scheduled to attend their clinical placement.

During the fall and spring semesters, TRRE residents attended their clinical placement 3 days per week, whereas Kern Urban residents attended 4 days per week. Both sets of residents were paired with a mentor teacher at the beginning of the school year and cotaught in this person's classroom, taking on progressively more responsibility over time in accordance with a program "phase-in schedule." TRRE residents remained with the same mentor for a full year, whereas Kern Urban residents cotaught with different mentors, commonly at a different school, during the fall and spring semesters. In both programs, residents were observed by and received ongoing informal and formal feedback that was based on the Danielson Framework for Teaching from their mentor teacher and a clinical coach from the university. Mentor teachers received ongoing professional learning that was designed to build their capacity as a clinical educator, which supported their ability to effectively reinforce program priorities within the resident's clinical practice.

**Recruitment and Admissions.** Both residency programs recruited locally. Kern Urban recruited applicants by advertising the program on BCSD and CSUB web pages and posting program flyers on CSUB's campus and at the BCSD district offices. Given the program's many years of operation, much recruitment occurred via word of mouth. TRRE, which served a more geographically disparate area, relied heavily on web-based and social media marketing. In addition to online marketing, the program established a presence in the community by tabling at large local events and posting flyers on bulletin boards at local businesses. Both TRRE and Kern recruited students who were enrolled in CSUB's liberal studies program, where academic advisors informed students about both residency programs as a credentialing option. During the application period, both residency programs regularly hosted informational meetings via Zoom

at which prospective candidates could learn more about the program. Furthermore, both programs' residency coordinators extended personalized support to applicants to help them navigate complicated application requirements.

In both programs, the residency's LEA partner actively participated in the admissions process. TRRE hosted virtual "advisement meetings" at which representatives from CSUB, TCOE, and the district partner conducted candidate interviews and then collaboratively determined whether the resident was a good fit for the program. Similarly, Kern Urban's group interviews were jointly hosted by CSUB and BCSD, and partner representatives deliberated together on admissions decisions. BCSD deeply valued its involvement in the admissions process. As BCSD Executive Director of New Teacher Development Mike Havens shared, "I want to be a part of choosing our residents because we're going to make a commitment to them, and they are also going to make a commitment to us. And yes, they're Cal State students, but they are going to be BCSD employees, hopefully until they retire."

**Resident Supports.** All CSUB residencies provided a resident stipend that supported residents with their living expenses and tuition payments. The studied programs created opportunities for residents to earn additional income by requiring them to get an Emergency 30-Day Substitute Teaching Permit, which allowed them to substitute teach while they were still in the residency program. Both programs' partners provided unique additional financial supports. For example, TCOE funded tuition for TRRE residents' prerequisite coursework, and BCSD reimbursed all fees associated with joining the program, including fees for residents' tuberculosis tests, Certificates of Clearance, Emergency 30-Day Substitute Teaching Permit, Live Scan, liability insurance, transcripts, physicals, SAT score verification, and all required fees for the California Subject Examinations for Teachers (CSETs).

Program supports extended beyond the provision of financial resources. Each residency built in supports for residents as they prepared to apply for their Preliminary Credential, most notably by providing a 2-semester course sequence that prepared residents for the submission of their first and second California Teaching Performance Assessment (CalTPA) Instructional Cycles. They also featured strong cohort structures, reinforced by weekly gatherings for in-person coursework, that provided residents with valuable social support, both during the program and after they accepted teaching positions in partner districts. As residents prepared to transition into full-time employment, residency staff helped them connect with open positions within the program partner district(s).

**Partnership.** Although partnership structures looked different between the two residencies, partnerships in each were characterized by intensive collaboration and coconstruction of residency programming. Kern Urban's single-district partnership allowed the program to tailor preparation to BCSD's specific context and to be nimble in adapting to changes in district priorities. The program leadership team, which included representatives from BCSD and CSUB, gathered for 90-minute biweekly meetings and maintained an active agenda that all leadership team members could contribute to between meetings. The partners articulated the commitments taken on by each party in a yearly letter of understanding and delineated, with greater specificity, the roles of the BCSD program specialist and CSUB residency coordinator (both of whom were the most actively involved team members in day-to-day residency operations) in a separate document. Constructive conflicts naturally arose as both partner organizations grew and changed, and role divisions between the LEA and the institution of higher education periodically required renegotiation.

TRRE operated as a partnership between CSUB and TCOE. Involving a county office as a residency partner is a relatively uncommon practice that, for TRRE, had many benefits. First, TCOE took the lead on brokering the relationship between TRRE and the three collaborating districts in which the program placed residents for their clinical experience. The long-standing relationships between the county office and district staff facilitated this collaboration. Second, TCOE's fiscal administration of the program, enabled by the organization's extensive experience with federal grants management and reporting, took this load off of overburdened university and district staff, allowing them to focus on resident and mentor development. Between CSUB and TCOE, program governance was informal, and decision-making was a collaborative effort. Program leads from each organization met weekly—and sometimes more frequently—to address programmatic needs.

**Financial Model.** The programs drew on different sources of funding. Kern Urban was started with a grant from a private foundation and has also received funding from the California Teacher Residency Grant. During the 2022–23 academic year, however, resident stipends were fully funded by the program's district partner, BCSD, which drew on funds from California's school funding formula, the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), to support the program's ongoing operations. In contrast, TRRE drew core operational support from a 5-year Teacher Quality Partnership grant during its start-up years and, at the time of the study, was in the process of planning a transition to more sustainable funding sources. Like Kern Urban, the program's cooperating districts used LCFF funds to partially fund residents' stipends, and program leadership viewed LEAs' contributions as an essential component of a financially sustainable program.

**Continuous Improvement.** During the residency year, CSUB's programs kept close tabs on resident development through ongoing feedback from mentor teachers, midyear surveys from site principals, and formal observation data collected by clinical coaches. Informal, qualitative data were also very important to the program. If data suggested that residents required additional support in a given area, program leads weren't afraid to course-correct midyear. At the conclusion of the program, residents completed end-of-year surveys to provide feedback on their experiences, which the residencies also used to support planning for the subsequent year. Residency leaders also continued to collect data on residents after they had left the program.

Well-developed data practices within residencies allowed the programs to communicate bright spots to justify these pathways as worthwhile ongoing investments. On the basis of strong residency outcomes, EPP leaders successfully advocated for two new tenure lines for additional faculty to support residency preparation.

# Introduction

With a decade of experience in creating and running teacher residencies—numbering seven as of 2024—California State University, Bakersfield (CSUB) and its partners have developed strong residency structures that allow for the variations that different communities need. We studied two of the university’s residency programs: one focused on preparing teachers to work in an urban district in the large city of Bakersfield and one focused on preparing teachers to work in rural districts within Tulare County, a region located between Fresno and the Sierra Nevada.

CSUB, which is located in the southern part of California’s Central Valley, launched its first residency program in 2014 and has continuously operated teacher residencies ever since. As a result, the university houses substantive institutional knowledge on the design and operation of effective residency programs, which it has gained through years of experience and extensive, ongoing guidance from technical assistance providers such as the National Center for Teacher Residencies and WestEd. The university received national recognition for its residency expertise in 2019, when it was awarded the Christa McAuliffe Excellence in Teacher Education Award from the American Association of State Colleges and Universities for its residency pathways.<sup>1</sup>

As of the 2023–24 school year, CSUB operated a consortium of seven teacher residency programs. Each CSUB teacher residency program partners with one or more local education agency (LEA), and, in some cases, multiple programs partner with the same LEA. Programs work closely with their LEA partners to tailor preparation in accordance with localized staffing needs and collaboratively determined priorities. CSUB is

Programs work closely with their LEA partners to tailor preparation in accordance with localized staffing needs and collaboratively determined priorities.

well positioned to facilitate local talent development because the majority of the university’s students come from nearby communities. As a result, residency programs can recruit candidates who would like to remain in the region and serve their communities by working in local schools.

CSUB residencies represent high-quality preparation options. Across the seven residencies, CSUB residents rated their programs highly, averaging 4.3 out of 5.0 overall on the 2021 California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) completer survey. Furthermore, the individual residencies studied in this report prepared candidates who were hired and retained at high rates within partner districts and who tended to be more diverse than California’s general teacher population.

In this report, we present case studies of two CSUB residencies: the Kern Urban Teacher Residency (Kern Urban) and the Teacher Residency for Rural Education (TRRE). Kern Urban, established in 2016, is CSUB’s longest-running residency program and partners with a single urban school district. TRRE, in contrast, hosted its first cohort in 2020 and prepares residents to teach in a specifically rural context. For this residency, CSUB partnered with the Tulare County Office of Education (TCOE), which facilitated placements in three separate districts as of the 2022–23 academic year. Notably, as of the 2024–25 academic year,

TCOE no longer partners with CSUB and instead partners with California State University, Fresno and California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt to operate the residency. (See [Next Steps](#) in the TRRE section.) The different contexts and designs of the Kern Urban and TRRE programs help illustrate how the residency model can be modified to meet the needs of both large urban and small rural districts.

The case studies presented in this report were guided by the overarching question “How do successful residencies do their work?” They are part of a larger multiple case study of five highly effective California teacher residency programs across four different institutions of higher education. All of the included programs were purposely selected because they incorporate research-backed characteristics of effective residencies, which allowed the research team to examine how they implemented these characteristics. (See the report *Successful Teacher Residencies: What Matters and What Works* for a discussion of how, across cases, programs have designed and implemented research-aligned residency models.)

The goal of these individual case write-ups is to document each program’s practices in greater detail by describing each program’s infrastructure; design; recruitment strategies; resident, mentor teacher, and graduate supports; partnerships; leadership; and financial sustainability. In this report, we share the insights obtained from our close examination of how each residency shapes its program structure to suit the needs of its LEA partner(s). Through these detailed case write-ups, we aim to provide information and describe program practices that can inform the design and continuous improvement of residency programs across the country.

For each program, we drew data from program documents as well as interviews and focus groups with a wide range of constituents, such as current residents, residency graduates, mentor teachers, clinical coaches, course instructors, hosting or hiring principals, residency program leaders, teacher preparation program administrators, and LEA administrators. Transcriptions were coded iteratively, with attention to categories derived from prior research and to themes that emerged from the case study data. In particular, we focused analytical attention on the following questions:

- How are residencies structured in terms of their organization, programming, and financing?
- What is the experience like for residents?
- What procedural and structural features support the residency to enable smooth operations and program success?
- What ongoing challenges do residencies face?

Before diving into the individual case studies, we begin by discussing areas of overlap between CSUB teacher residency programs, namely:

- CSUB’s institutional support for residencies,
- the programs’ financial sustainability, and
- practices that are shared across residency programs at the university.

In the subsequent sections, we provide an in-depth look at the “nuts and bolts” of each program in turn, specifically:

- program design and implementation of academic and clinical components,
- recruitment and admissions procedures,
- supports available to residents during and beyond the program year,
- partnership structure and roles,
- program outcomes,
- financial models, and
- continuous improvement processes.

We conclude by recapitulating the residencies’ shared practices and the significance of differing programmatic strategies.

# Residency Pathways at CSUB

By virtue of their shared institutional home, the teacher residency programs at California State University, Bakersfield (CSUB)—including those profiled in the following two sections, Kern Urban Teacher Residency Program (Kern Urban) and Teacher Residency for Rural Education (TRRE)—shared certain features. Before discussing these features, we describe the institutional context that has contributed to CSUB’s support for residency pathways and issues of financial sustainability. Next, we discuss the practices that are shared across both profiled residency programs, including application and admissions procedures, core coursework, structures for clinical experience and feedback, and resident supports.

## Institutional Support for Residencies

CSUB’s suite of teacher residency pathways has developed, in part, due to a supportive institutional climate. James Rodríguez, former Dean of the School of Social Sciences and Education, said that the objectives of these programs “align with the overall vision and goals not just for the [School of Social Sciences and Education], but also for the university.” Residency partnerships also built on existing collaborations between the university and local education stakeholders. For example, CSUB, as an institution, is a signatory to the Kern Education Pledge, a commitment shared across 46 school districts and 2 community college districts to improve educational outcomes for children in the Kern region. It is also a partner to the Kern Coalition, a regional collaborative effort to respond to state grant opportunities for workforce development projects through the Community Economic Resilience Fund. Residencies contribute to these and other closely related institutional priorities to prepare highly skilled educators, diversify the teacher workforce, and support more equitable economic outcomes within Bakersfield and the surrounding regions.

Rodríguez highlighted compelling outcomes:

Our residency programs have a very high completion rate and a remarkable placement rate, with most of our completers remaining within this region, within either Tulare, Kern, or Northern Los Angeles County. The majority of them end up working for the school district that is affiliated with their residency experience. ... Residency programs also provide an opportunity for strong relationships between district partners and the university ... [which contributes to] greater interconnectedness in terms of [how we think] about education in this region.

Furthermore, he shared that the demographics of residency participants better reflect the racial diversity of CSUB’s student population than do the university’s other teacher credentialing programs, demonstrating the effectiveness of residencies in creating access to teacher preparation for candidates of color. Well-developed data practices within residencies allowed the programs to communicate these and other bright spots to justify these pathways as worthwhile ongoing investments. On the basis of strong residency outcomes, Rodríguez had, in recent years, successfully advocated for two new tenure lines for additional faculty to support residency preparation.

The university’s multiple residency programs, coupled with traditional and internship pathways, provide prospective teachers with many options for acquiring their credential and entering teaching. The variety in credentialing pathways was viewed by university leadership as a positive feature because it gives students the opportunity to select pathways that meet their needs (e.g., desired timeline, need for

financial support) and interests (e.g., credential area, location where they would like to teach). The trade-off is that the availability of multiple pathways can create confusion for students who may have difficulty distinguishing between different options for preparation. With this in mind, various university staff, typically program coordinators, spent time clarifying the features of different pathways (e.g., traditional, internship, and residency) and introducing students to the variety of residency options available to them. Similar clarification was needed to help mentor teachers understand how their role varies between pathways.

As CSUB continues to develop and refine its residency programming, Rodríguez noted the importance of “keeping your eye on the other pathways” to preserve a balance between the university’s various preparation options. The former Department Chair for Teacher Education, Bre Evans-Santiago, also noted that there are opportunities for administrators in the different pathways to learn from each other’s successes: “As the chair, I’m trying to figure out what methods we’ve used in residencies [that we can pull in] to add support for our traditional [preparation program] students.”

## Financial Sustainability

While CSUB has expanded its suite of residency pathways using state, federal, and private grant funds, the university prioritizes the development of sustainable funding models. “We want to be able to have these programs run without [reliance on grant] funding,” said Evans-Santiago. The preferred strategy has been for local education agency (LEA) partners to invest in the residency program as part of the partnership agreement. This strategy has been leveraged successfully by several of CSUB’s seven residencies, including Kern Urban (profiled later in this report), which was 100% district funded during the 2022–23 academic year. In these instances, residency partner LEAs wrote the residency into their Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAPs)—a document that California LEAs use to set goals, plan actions, and detail how state formula funding will be used to achieve district goals—as a workforce development and hiring strategy. Doing so enables them to allocate district Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF; California’s school funding formula) funds toward resident stipends and program support staff. Given residents’ multiyear service commitments, this investment makes sense for many districts, which anticipate that resident costs can be recouped through future savings on the recruitment, hiring, and onboarding of new teachers.

In addition to grant and district funding, CSUB residency programs depend on the university’s continued investment in residencies as preparation pathways. While the university, as of the 2022–23 academic year, provided little, if any, direct budgetary support toward program operations, it contributed in-kind dollars when these investments were required by grants and secured the staffing necessary for residency administration and coursework. These were not insubstantial expenses, and former Dean Rodríguez noted that the impact on the university budget has the potential to be an “issue down the line for sustainability.” With this in mind, Rodríguez shared that building residency faculty’s capacity to budget and engage in long-term planning is essential to the long-term sustainability of residency programs within the university. For the time being, however, the university’s high valuation of residencies as preparation pathways ensured that they would continue to have necessary resources.

## Shared Residency Practices

Although each of the seven CSUB residencies had a different credentialing focus and other unique characteristics, they all shared certain core practices. To help promote cohesion across programs, the university created the CSUB Teacher Residency Consortium, a professional learning community that brought together on a monthly basis all of the university's residency coordinators—the faculty members who manage each residency's day-to-day operations. The Consortium served numerous purposes. In addition to supporting alignment across programs, it enabled residency coordinators to share successful practices, exchange ideas, and support each other through challenges. “I think [the Consortium] really strengthens everything that we do, and we learn and grow with each other in that process,” reflected then-Residency Coordinator Adriana Cervantes-González.

Holly Gonzales, Residency Coordinator for Kern Urban, led the Consortium for the 2022–23 academic year. In addition to facilitating the sharing of practices between CSUB programs, Gonzales also attended meetings hosted by the California Teacher Residency Lab and the National Center for Teacher Residencies and brought back lessons to share with the Consortium. As a result, Consortium meetings allowed for the cross-pollination of ideas and practices both within the institution and with the national community of teacher residency practitioners.

Consortium meetings supported the alignment of residency practices across programs and with the overarching goals and commitments of CSUB's Department of Teacher Education. Coursework and clinical expectations, across residencies, were built around seven prioritized teaching practices, which were designed to help residents become effective practitioners who are ready to support the diverse students served by partner districts. Programs prioritized developing residents' ability to do the following:

1. Build relationships and interact with students respectfully.
2. Engage learners effectively.
3. [Manage] class procedures and student behavior.
4. [Utilize] a variety of resources to plan, design, and implement instruction that meets learners' diverse needs.
5. Elicit student thinking and discussion.
6. Demonstrate flexibility and responsiveness using assessment in instruction.
7. Grow and develop as a professional.<sup>2</sup>

These shared candidate competencies, which align with California's Teacher Performance Expectations, supported continuity across CSUB's Department of Teacher Education while allowing each residency to be unique. Course objectives, professional development for residents and mentors, the clinical observation rubric, and residents' summative assessments all cohered around these high-leverage practices.

All of CSUB's residency programs involved a deep partnership between the university and one or more LEAs. Programs offered credentials that aligned with LEAs' staffing needs, and they tailored residents' yearlong preparation to their partners' culture and priorities. (See [Table 1.](#)) All programs gave residents stipends to help cover their residency-year expenses, in exchange for a commitment to teach in the program's partner LEA(s) for 3 or 4 years following program completion.

Residency program coordinators, who were full-time lecturers or tenure-track faculty, led each program and acted as the bridge between the university and LEA partner(s). They also oversaw and supported current residents, helped with recruitment, and served as the main point of contact for program applicants. In addition to these responsibilities, program coordinators taught residency courses and, in some cases, provided clinical coaching to a portion of their residents. By concentrating these responsibilities within a single position, the university enhanced each residency’s affordability, although the coordinators we interviewed noted that this concentration came at the expense of their own work-life balance and long-term ability to remain in such a heavily loaded role.

Each residency aimed to recruit residents who lived in or had roots in and around partner school districts and the communities served by the residency, with the assumption that this recruitment strategy would increase graduate teacher retention rates due to the residents’ lifelong connections to the area. In addition, because some of the partner districts were located as far as 100 miles away from CSUB’s main campus, the residencies typically held in-person classes and meetings at locations within or in close proximity to their partner LEAs.

Each residency aimed to recruit residents who lived in or had roots in and around partner school districts and the communities served by the residency.

**Table 1. CSUB Teacher Residency Programs, 2023–24**

Residency program	Description
<b>Kern Urban Teacher Residency<sup>a</sup></b>	The Kern Urban Teacher Residency is a partnership between CSUB and the Bakersfield City School District (BCSD). The residency is dedicated to educating highly prepared teacher candidates through the implementation of unique coursework and clinical practice methods that were developed by CSUB and BCSD educators. The residency offers Multiple Subject and Single Subject credential pathways.
<b>Teacher Residency for Rural Education<sup>a</sup></b>	Until the 2024–25 academic year, the Teacher Residency for Rural Education (TRRE) operated as a partnership between CSUB and the Tulare County Office of Education. <sup>b</sup> The program was—and continues to be—dedicated to excellence in preparing educators with the cultural competency and connection to community they need to make a significant impact in rural settings. The residency offered Single Subject credential pathways at the time of the study, although it has since expanded credential options.

Residency program	Description
<b>Education Specialist Teacher Residency—Bakersfield</b>	The Education Specialist Teacher Residency–Bakersfield is a partnership between CSUB and BCSD. It provides preparation to graduate students seeking to earn their Education Specialist Credential in either Mild to Moderate Support Needs or Extensive Support Needs.
<b>Black Educator Teacher Residency</b>	The Black Educator Teacher Residency is dedicated to recruiting and retaining diverse individuals, with an emphasis on Afrocentric cultural competency. This virtual residency focuses on transitional kindergarten (TK) through grade 9 and prepares residents for a Multiple Subject credential. The online program partners with districts across California.
<b>Greenfield Teacher Residency for Education Specialists</b>	The Greenfield Teacher Residency for Education Specialists is a partnership between CSUB and Greenfield Union School District that provides an alternative pathway for students seeking a Preliminary Credential in Special Education for either Mild to Moderate Support Needs or Extensive Support Needs.
<b>Kern High Teacher Residency</b>	The Kern High Teacher Residency is a partnership between CSUB and the Kern High School District (KHSD). The residency is dedicated to educating highly prepared teacher candidates with Single Subject credentials through unique coursework and clinical practice methods that were developed by CSUB and KHSD educators.
<b>Kern Teacher Residency</b>	The Kern Teacher Residency is a yearlong teacher preparation program in which residents take coursework for a Multiple Subject credential and complete a clinical practice within the Greenfield Union School District. Classes are cotaught by faculty from both CSUB and Greenfield, making the content relevant to what is occurring in the classrooms where the residents are placed.

<sup>a</sup> These residencies were studied as part of this multiple case study.

<sup>b</sup> As of the 2024–25 academic year, TRRE no longer operates as a partnership between CSUB and TCOE. Instead, TCOE partners with California State University, Fresno and California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt to operate the residency.

Source: California State University, Bakersfield. [Teacher residencies](#). (accessed 07/30/2024).

## Application and Admissions

Like other licensure pathways at the university, CSUB teacher residencies aimed to prepare teachers with the “content, pedagogical, and professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn.”<sup>3</sup> The development of candidates’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions began before they were admitted to their residency program. To be eligible to apply to a residency program, applicants first needed to apply for admissions to CSUB’s credentialing program and complete a series of foundational courses. The one exception to the norm was TRRE (profiled later in this report), which incorporated the foundational coursework into the program itself and whose county office partner covered the cost of tuition for these courses.

Foundational coursework introduced key ideas, concepts, and skills that prepare candidates for the clinical experience. Courses included Introduction to Education (a field experience course that could be waived for candidates who had recently worked in classrooms), Sociocultural Foundations of Education, Teaching English Learners, and Technology for Educators. (See [Table 2.](#))

**Table 2. CSUB Foundational Courses**

Foundational courses (spring or summer term)
<b>EDTE 3000—Introduction to Education<sup>a</sup></b>
Introduction to Education is a field experience course that provides candidates with the opportunity to “observe, first-hand, the various learning characteristics of diverse learners across educational settings and to actively participate in a variety of instructional delivery systems that serve diverse student populations.” Candidates complete a minimum of 45 fieldwork hours and attend a series of seminars that facilitate reflection on the field experience.
<b>EDTE 3308—Sociocultural Foundations of Education</b>
Sociocultural Foundations of Education serves as a “general introduction to American education and the profession of teaching.” Candidates learn the history of American education, study contemporary issues, and learn about professional requirements, including credentialing. Discussions of these topics are grounded in critical historical and philosophical perspectives on the function and administration of education in American society that aim to prepare candidates to engage productively and compassionately with the diversity of social experiences they will encounter within educational institutions.

Foundational courses (spring or summer term)
<b>EDTE 4100—Teaching English Learners and Special Populations</b>
<p>Teaching English Learners and Special Populations promotes the “foundational knowledge and pedagogical skills necessary for working with diverse learners,” with a specific emphasis on English learners, students with special needs, and gifted learners. The course also discusses “the evolution of legal entitlements of English learners and students with special needs,” introduces candidates to the implementation of the English Language Development Standards and Common Core State Standards, and prepares students to implement “culturally conducive and equitable instructional and assessment differentiation.”</p>
<b>EDTE 4200—Technology for Educators</b>
<p>Technology for Educators provides an introduction to using technology to enhance and facilitate classroom instruction and student learning. Candidates explore pedagogical issues around technology usage and discuss topics including “technology concepts, use of technologies as a communication tool, instructional strategies, materials and adaptive technology for use with children with exceptionalities, digital citizenship, digital literacy and digital ethics.” The course also introduces candidates to hardware, software, websites, and applications that are used in K–12 environments.</p>

<sup>a</sup> A waiver for this course is available to candidates who, within the last 2 years, have worked at least 45 hours in a general education classroom as a paraprofessional, teacher’s aide, or substitute/emergency teacher, as well as for those who have engaged in a documented field experience.

Source: California State University, Bakersfield (n.d.). *Multiple subject and single subject program matrix and syllabi*. pp. 18, 31, 44, 68.

After completing foundational coursework, candidates were eligible to apply to their residency program, although admission was not guaranteed. In addition to completing a program application form and submitting two recommendation letters, applicants also needed to submit verification that they had met certain requirements for participating in a clinical experience and later teacher credentialing. These requirements included:

- paying a credential service request fee,
- meeting both the Basic Skills and Subject Matter Competency requirements,<sup>4</sup>
- providing a copy of fingerprint and background checks and tuberculosis clearance,
- completing mandated reporter training, and
- passing a writing assessment.

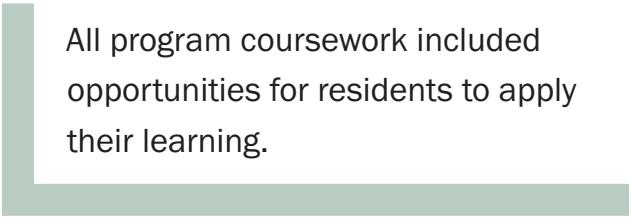
Program coordinators typically extended support to applicants to help them navigate application requirements. (See Kern Urban [Recruitment and Admissions](#) and TRRE [Recruitment and Admissions](#) for program-specific details.) After applicants submitted a complete application, they participated in a program interview, which was often conducted in tandem by program and LEA partner representatives.

## Core Coursework

After they gained acceptance to a residency program, residents began their core program coursework. Residencies shared a standard set of course requirements with all Multiple Subject and Single Subject credentialing pathways. (Course requirements are discussed at length in the program profiles.) However, for each program, the university created a separate residency-specific course section for each required course that was only open to the program's residents. This design allowed programs to put residents together in cohorts and cluster in-person coursework on a single day of the week when residents were not scheduled to attend their clinical placements. Furthermore, it enabled the CSUB faculty who taught the residency-specific course sections to tailor course content to the residency context by integrating topics related to partner LEAs' student demographics and district culture into course content, discussions, and assignments.

In many cases, programs hosted coursework at locations other than CSUB's main campus. In the case of both Kern Urban and TRRE, residents took coursework at the LEA partner's central office, and each partner allowed the programs to use their office space at no cost. This practice generated cost savings on classroom space for the university while also providing residents with additional opportunities to develop familiarity with partner LEA facilities and staff. Having residents take courses at the LEAs' offices also cut down on commuting time for many residents because partner offices were often closer than CSUB's main campus to a resident's home.

All program coursework included opportunities for residents to apply their learning. Each core program course, except for two courses focused on California Teacher Performance Assessment (CalTPA) preparation, culminated with a "signature assignment" in which residents demonstrated, reinforced, and extended their



All program coursework included opportunities for residents to apply their learning.

learning by completing a Teacher Performance Expectations-aligned capstone project. Projects varied by course: Residents were asked to conduct a literature review; engage in a student case study; or develop a lesson plan, instructional unit, or community-based literacy project. Signature assignments had multiple components, many of which aligned to elements included in the CalTPA. For example, the unit-planning signature assignment for Strategies and Methods of Teaching for the Single Subject Classroom included an introduction, unit plan, unit calendar, five daily lesson plans, and critical self-reflection.

Instructors spaced the submission of individual components over the course of the semester, and residents submitted a final document that was a compilation of all of the components at the end of the semester. In addition to giving instructors an occasion to evaluate residents' learning and thinking, each signature assignment contributed to a resident's instructional portfolio and could be used by the resident as an instructional resource during their clinical placement or in their first lead teaching role.

## Clinical Experience and Feedback

During the fall and spring semesters, residents attended their clinical placement 3 or 4 days per week, depending on their specific residency schedule. They were paired with a mentor teacher at the beginning of the school year and cotaught in this person's classroom. Depending on the program, residents either remained in the same mentor teacher's classroom for the full residency year or worked with a different mentor teacher, potentially at a different school, during the fall and spring semesters. In both cases, residents operated as a coteacher in the mentor teacher's classroom and took on additional responsibilities as the year progressed.

All CSUB credentialing pathways, including the two residencies profiled in this report, used the Danielson Framework for Teaching to monitor candidates' progress and as a clinical rubric for measuring prioritized skills and guiding candidate feedback. The Danielson Framework is an instructional resource that "provides a road map for effective teaching" and that is widely used by schools and districts as a teacher evaluation tool.<sup>5</sup> The Framework organizes teaching skills into six Clusters, which align with both the high-leverage practices that ground CSUB residency preparation and the California Teacher Performance Expectations:

1. Clarity and Accuracy
2. Learning Environment
3. Classroom Management
4. Intellectual Engagement
5. Successful Learning
6. Professionalism<sup>6</sup>

Programs use these Clusters to scaffold the development of residents' teaching skills over the course of the residency year. The Danielson Clusters also guided cycles of observation and feedback, by both the mentor teacher and the clinical coach, which we discuss in greater detail later in this report.

Each program guided residents' progressive undertaking of elevated responsibility in their placement classroom with a "phase-in schedule." These schedules broke each semester into 2-week increments and advised mentor teachers and residents about the roles, responsibilities, and coteaching strategies they should consider taking on during each period. Mentor teachers could shift the phase-in timeline according to their assessment of a resident's readiness.

The schedules also identified one or more Danielson Clusters for residents to focus on during each calendar increment, and course instructors complemented this clinical focus by emphasizing skills and knowledge associated with each Cluster in coursework during that period. The phase-in schedule paced the Clusters so that residents would cycle through all Clusters once during the fall semester and again during the spring semester, allowing them to reinforce their learning and refine practices across successive semesters.

As part of their clinical experience, residents received ongoing feedback from their mentor teachers. Since they shared a classroom with the resident for multiple days each week, a mentor teacher had ample opportunity to informally observe and provide feedback on their resident's developing classroom practice. Mentor and resident pairs set aside a minimum of an hour each week for "Coaching Time," which provided

an opportunity to debrief, talk through feedback, coplan, and discuss other classroom- or program-related matters. The phase-in schedule identified additional relevant topics for residents and mentors to discuss at these meetings for each of the 2-week intervals, including interventions and differentiation, informative assessments, and student data, among other topics.

At regular intervals, which varied by program, mentor teachers performed more formal scheduled observations. During scheduled observations, the mentor teacher focused on the specific Danielson Clusters identified in the phase-in schedule for the observation period. For example, if the schedule specified Learning Environment as a focal Cluster, then the mentor teacher would attend to the resident's efforts to create a "safe, respectful, and challenging learning environment" during their observations for that period. At the next Coaching Time, mentors would provide written feedback on the observation and help the resident identify the next steps in the development of their professional practice in the Cluster area. The written feedback from scheduled observations was also shared with program coordinators so that they could track residents' progress.

Residents were also formally observed by the university's clinical coach at regular intervals, in accordance with state requirements. Depending on the program, these observations took place in person or virtually, or they varied between the formats. In instances where coaching occurred virtually, residents video-recorded specific elements of their teaching and shared this video with their coach for review. Clinical coaches used the Danielson Clusters to guide their observations of and feedback on residents' clinical practice, and they maintained written records of observations using a program template.

## **Resident Supports**

All CSUB residencies provided financial support to enrolled residents. Most notably, all programs paid residents a stipend that helped them cover their living expenses and tuition payments during the program year. In exchange, residents made a commitment to teach for 3 or 4 years in a partner LEA. Programs also created opportunities for residents to supplement their stipend with extra income through substitute teaching, although programs adopted different restrictions around this practice to preserve the learning focus of the clinical experience. Residents also could access other state, federal, and private sources of tuition support. Most notably, residents were eligible for the Golden State Teacher Grant, which awards up to \$20,000 to a teacher candidate in exchange for a commitment to work in a California priority school or preschool program for 4 years following program completion.

In addition to financial support, residents could access a number of university-based student benefits, including basic health services, no-cost professional counseling and psychiatric services, and assistance with financing their degree and applying to grants through CSUB's Office of Student Financial Services. In addition, residents could consult the university's Credentials Office for support with credentialing requirements and applications, although individual programs also provide their own forms of credentialing support to residents.

Residents benefited from extensive support as they prepared and submitted their CalTPA. All CSUB credentialing programs featured a two-course sequence, TPA Cycle 1 and TPA Cycle 2, that prepared residents for the submission of their first and second CalTPA Instructional Cycles. Each class paced the planning and execution of TPA tasks throughout the semester and helped residents become familiar with the specific rubrics that CalTPA reviewers use to assess their work. The classes created opportunities

for peer and group support as residents completed the TPA.<sup>7</sup> Given the accelerated nature of residency programs, residents from both programs included in this report expressed appreciation for this highly structured approach to the TPA process. “[The courses] were extremely helpful. I wouldn’t have passed [TPA Cycle 1] were it not for our professor,” said one resident.

Residents also received highly valued support from program faculty and their residency cohort. Each program’s residency coordinator oversaw residents’ experience and served as the go-to person for residents during their residency year. Throughout the program, residency coordinators monitored residents’ academic progress, clinical experiences, and general well-being. Residents viewed their coordinators as strong advocates who customized support to each resident’s unique circumstances. One Kern Urban resident effusively praised the wraparound support she experienced from Kern Urban Residency Coordinator Holly Gonzales, who was also her clinical coach:

Personally, I think Holly is the best person in the world to be running [Kern Urban]. She is amazing and very knowledgeable in what she does. ... For instance, on my lesson plan, she left some really great comments on what I can improve or what I can add or other things I probably wouldn’t have thought of on my own. ... She’s been very helpful to me in personal areas. Over winter break, I got really sick, and I hadn’t finished some of my coursework because I got sick the weekend before it was due. I immediately called her, and she really helped me maneuver through that and contacted my professor to explain to him what was going on. She kind of steps in on all aspects. She steps in on the personal, she steps in on the clinical, she steps in in any way we need her.

The cohort structure also provided social support that residents described as essential. Residents spoke to the importance of studying together, holding each other accountable, sharing resources and perspectives, commiserating over challenges, and celebrating classroom and credentialing successes as they worked through the rigors of the residency year. In the following sections, we discuss the features unique to each program’s cohort structures in the individual discussions of the Kern Urban and TRRE programs.

# Kern Urban Teacher Residency

The Kern Urban Teacher Residency (Kern Urban) is a 10-month postbaccalaureate residency program offered in partnership with Bakersfield City School District (BCSD). (See [Table 3.](#)) The residency operates in accordance with the following mission statement:

The Kern Urban Teacher Residency is dedicated to excellence in preparing educators with distinguished pedagogical skills, cultural competency, and connection to the community for the Bakersfield City School District. The Kern Urban Teacher Residency will actively recruit talented and passionate future educators to decrease the attrition rate within Bakersfield City School District. We will provide systematic support, to foster a sustainable partnership between CSU Bakersfield and the Bakersfield City School District.<sup>8</sup>

Over 2 semesters, Kern Urban residents work toward a Multiple Subject credential or a Single Subject credential in math or science while coteaching in a BCSD transitional kindergarten (TK)–grade 8 classroom for 4 days each week. The program includes a particular emphasis on preparing candidates to integrate science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education into the general TK–8 curriculum using the California Common Core State Standards for Mathematics and the Next Generation Science Standards. Residents make a commitment to teach in BCSD for 4 years following their completion of the program.

Kern Urban has a number of notable features as a residency. The program is the longest-operating residency at CSUB, and its longevity is, at least in part, a function of a strong single-district partnership with BCSD. Kern Urban's single-district partnership allows the program to tailor preparation to BCSD's specific context and to be nimble in adapting to changes in district priorities. "We are creating a pipeline of highly qualified, passionate teachers who look and sound like the students in BCSD, who go in to serve them and love them and be the best seven and a half hours that those kids have in the day," shared Kern Urban Residency Coordinator Holly Gonzales.

One of the residency's explicit goals, laid out in its mission statement, is to decrease teacher attrition rates within BCSD. With this goal in mind, program leads from CSUB and BCSD have worked together to modify coursework so that it aligns with district needs and priorities and the district staff's insights into important supports for early-career teachers. As an outcome of this strong partnership, the program was, as of the 2022–23 academic year, fully funded by the district using Local Control Funding Formula dollars. The district's ongoing investment in the Kern Urban program communicates that it values the residency pathway as an effective talent development strategy for BCSD.

Kern Urban provides high-quality preparation that equips residents to succeed and persist in the teaching profession. The program has implemented research-aligned practices in residency preparation through the tight integration of coursework and clinical practice, the provision of financial supports to residents in exchange for a 4-year service commitment, opportunities to coteach with expert mentor teachers, and support for program graduates as they transition into induction.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, the program has extraordinarily well-developed systems for data collection and analysis. The leadership team, which, as of the 2022–23 academic year, consisted of individuals from BCSD and CSUB, engages in ongoing collaboration for data-driven decision-making, resulting in a continuous recalibration of program practices with the goal of improving residents' experiences and outcomes for the district.

**Table 3. Kern Urban Teacher Residency Summary, 2022–23**

Characteristic	Description
<b>Program length</b>	10 months (August through May)
<b>Credentials offered</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple Subject (K–8)</li> <li>• Single Subject (math, science)</li> </ul>
<b>Master’s degree offered</b>	No
<b>Program cost</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tuition: \$6,660</li> <li>• Books and supplies: \$1,152<sup>a</sup></li> <li>• Tests/Certification fees: \$0 (reimbursed by program<sup>b</sup>)</li> <li>• Housing/Food/Transportation/Misc.: \$22,644</li> </ul>
<b>Financial supports for residents</b>	<p>Living stipend: \$18,000–\$23,000</p> <p>Grants: up to \$31,390 (need- and eligibility-based)<sup>c</sup></p> <p>Scholarships: up to \$20,028 (need- and eligibility-based)<sup>d</sup></p> <p>Opportunities for substitute teaching: yes</p> <p>Conference travel funds: \$3,000</p>
<b>Resident enrollment</b>	20
<b>Racial demographics of residents (cumulative)</b>	3.1% Asian or Asian American; 3.9% Black or African American; 68.0% Hispanic or Latino/a; 19.5% White; 5.5% two or more races
<b>Clinical experience</b>	4 days per week, August–June
<b>1-year program completion rate</b>	94% (97% 2-year completion rate)
<b>Percentage of program graduates with full-time employment in the partner local education agency (LEA) where they completed their clinical experience</b>	100%
<b>3-year retention rate of 2017–2021 program graduates in the partner LEA</b>	84%

<sup>a</sup> Estimate based on average expenses reported by California students on the 2018–19 Student Expenses and Resource Survey, adjusted for inflation.

<sup>b</sup> As of 2022–23, Kern Urban reimbursed accepted residents for fees associated with the following: tuberculosis test, Certificate of Clearance, Emergency 30-Day Substitute Teaching Permit, Live Scan, liability insurance, transcripts, physicals, SAT score verification, and California Subject Examinations for Teachers (when taken in a certain window).

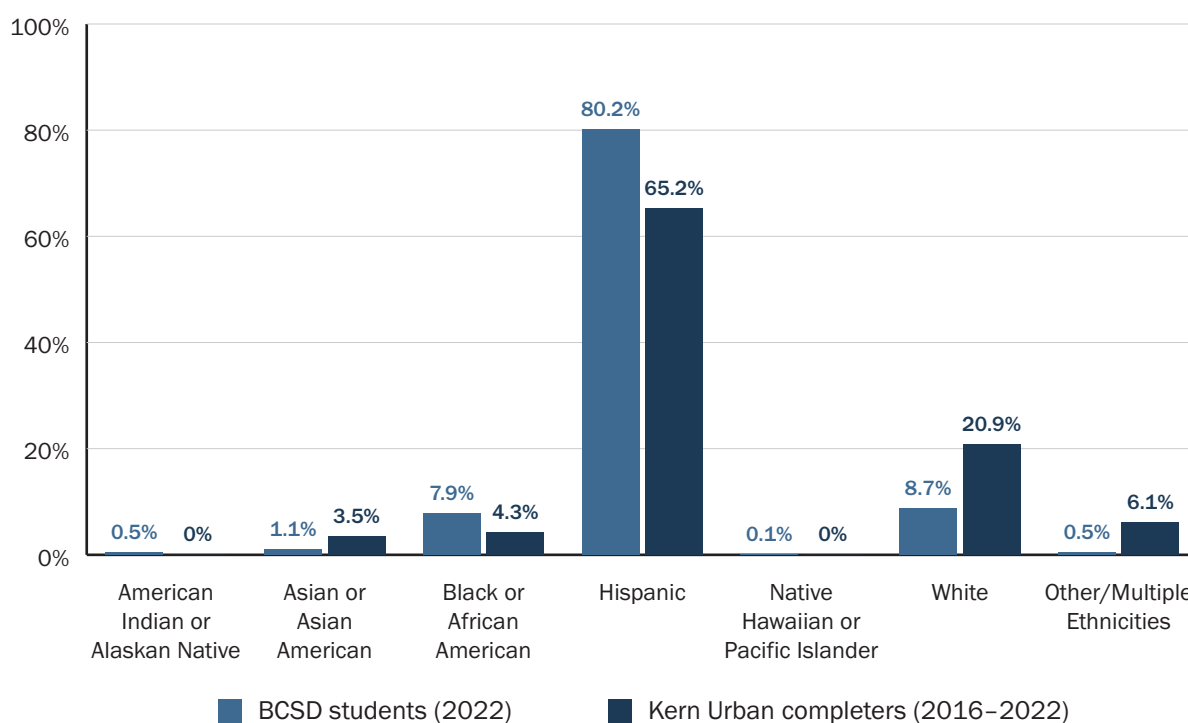
<sup>c</sup> \$20,000 (Golden State Teacher Grant) + \$7,390 (Cal Grant for California State University system) + \$4,000 (federal Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education [TEACH] Grant).

<sup>d</sup> \$10,000 (California State University Robert Noyce Scholarship) + \$5,000 (CSU Residency Year Scholarship) + \$5,028 (California's Middle Class Scholarship; dependent on family income).

Sources: California Student Aid Commission. *Middle Class Scholarship*. (accessed 07/20/24); California Student Aid Commission. *What are the Cal Grant Award amounts*. (accessed 07/20/24); California Student Aid Commission. (2021). *2022–23 student expense budgets*; California State University. *Robert Noyce Scholarships*. (accessed 07/20/24); California State University. *CSU Residency Year Scholarship*. (accessed 07/20/24); California State University, Bakersfield. (2022). *Kern Urban Teacher Residency Handbook*.

Outcomes speak to the program's efficacy. Between 2016 and 2023, the program graduated 128 residents, representing a 98% cumulative program completion rate and a significant teacher pipeline for BCSD. Out of all program completers, 68.0% identified as Hispanic, 19.5% as White, 3.9% as Black or African American, and 3.1% as Asian or Asian American, and 5.5% identified with two or more racial groups. District officials reported that program graduates were more diverse than incoming BCSD teachers prepared through other pathways and that their racial and ethnic identities more closely matched BCSD student demographics. (See [Figure 1](#).) Furthermore, residency-prepared teachers tended to remain in the district. The program features a 100% 1-year retention rate, an 84% 3-year retention rate for 2017–2021 graduates, and a 78% 5-year retention rate for graduates from the first two program cohorts. Given that residents make only a 4-year commitment to work in BCSD, this high 5-year retention rate is notable and shows that most graduates remain in the district beyond the end of their 4-year service requirement.

**Figure 1. Demographic Comparison Between Bakersfield City School District Students and Kern Urban Completers**



Source: The Residency Lab. (2023, January 27). *Data talk with CTC: Kern Urban* [YouTube video]. Californians Dedicated to Education Foundation. (accessed 07/20/24).

## Background

Kern Urban began operations in 2016, funded by a 3-year, \$900,000 grant from the New Generation of Educators Initiative (NGEI). This initiative, launched through a partnership between the California State University (CSU) system and the S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, aimed to support the reform of teacher preparation programs at institutions in the CSU system, with the ultimate goal of increasing “the number of teachers who entered the profession prepared to deliver instruction aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).”<sup>10</sup> The grant provided the opportunity for Kristina LaGue, the former Department Chair of Teacher Education at CSUB, to actualize her long-standing ambition to develop a residency program with BCSD. The university had for years placed teacher candidates in BCSD to complete their student teaching, and relationships between university and district officials were well established. District leaders—specifically then–Assistant Superintendent Mark Luque (now Superintendent) and BCSD Coordinator of New Teacher Development Valerie Saylor—were active partners in writing the grant and designing the program.

The National Center for Teacher Residencies (NCTR) also contributed technical assistance during the program design process, funded by the NGEI grant. Participation in NCTR institutes, alongside other emerging and existing residency programs, helped program leaders think through how to institutionalize the teacher residency model at the university, develop “a joint process for mentor teacher and resident selection,” codify the division of roles and responsibilities between partners, and develop other “policy and procedures documents” that could support administrators as they organize and guide the partnership.<sup>11</sup> This initial coplanning helped establish the firm partnership foundation from which the residency has continued to grow.

While Kern Urban represents only one of BCSD’s many strategies for addressing teacher shortages and vacancies, it is nonetheless an important part of the district’s talent pipeline. BCSD is a large TK–8 district that, as of the 2022–23 academic year, operated 44 schools and employed close to 1,900 credentialed staff.<sup>12</sup> Due to the district’s size, it has an ongoing need for new teacher hires. Given Kern Urban residents’ 4-year commitment to teach for BCSD following program completion, the program provides a particularly stable source of new teacher talent.

In recognition of Kern Urban’s value, the district has invested significantly in the program. When the 3-year NGEI grant term ended, the district made the decision to sustain the program fully using Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) funds. Although Kern Urban has, in past years, also drawn on Teacher Residency Expansion Grant funds through the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, the program was fully funded by BCSD as of the 2022–23 academic year. In addition to this significant financial commitment, the district has sustained support for the program through the turnover and replacement of key residency-supporting district leaders, further providing evidence of the district’s commitment to this residency pathway.

## Program Design

During the 2022–23 academic year, Kern Urban prepared residents to earn a Multiple Subject or Single Subject (math and/or science) California Preliminary Teaching Credential. Admitted Kern Urban residents began the program as a cohort in the fall and completed 2 semesters of coursework and coteaching at an elementary or middle school clinical placement within BCSD. Residents typically completed the program in May of the same academic year, for a total completion time of 10 months.

In addition to addressing the California Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs) and program standards, the residency targeted the seven prioritized teaching practices that guide CSUB teacher preparation across pathways. (See [Shared Residency Practices](#).) The program strategically developed these practices by embedding them in the objectives and standards for each course, delivering aligned professional development for residents and mentor teachers, and reinforcing the practices in clinical observations and evaluations.

## Program Structure

Residents engaged in hybrid coursework during the fall and spring semesters (see [Table 4](#)), with some classes taking place in person and others taking place in a virtual format. Residents attended in-person coursework as a cohort every Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Coursework took place at a BCSD administrative building, rather than at CSUB’s main campus, which provided residents with additional opportunities to familiarize themselves with the district leaders and resources that were colocated in these spaces. In addition to Friday courses, residents attended a monthly Resident Learning Community (RLC) led by Kern Urban Residency Coordinator Holly Gonzales on the second Tuesday of the month from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m. Through these multiple points of engagement, the program aimed to “carefully and systematically bridge the gap between clinical practice and coursework.”<sup>13</sup>

**Table 4. Kern Urban Course Requirements**

Fall term
<b>EDEL 5100—Literacy Arts for Diverse Learners (4 units, in person)</b>
Literacy Arts for Diverse Learners focuses on the teaching of literacy skills to students in grades TK–6 and covers relevant theory, research, and practice. The course addresses literacy assessment procedures, data-driven instruction and intervention practices, and how to meet the needs of learners from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
<b>EDEL 5200—Math Methods and Assessment (4 units, in person)</b>
Math Methods and Assessment addresses effective teaching strategies for the state-adopted academic content standards for K–6 mathematics. The course develops candidates’ ability to support students’ mathematical thinking, representation, and problem-solving, emphasizing the importance of creating a secure classroom environment in which students can take risks and cultivate “curiosity, flexibility, and persistence in solving mathematical problems.”

<b>EDEL 5300—Classroom Management and Differentiated Instruction (4 units, in person)</b>
Classroom Management and Differentiated Instruction prepares residents “to create a supportive and optimal learning environment for all students” through the adoption of classroom management techniques, with a particular focus on the personal and environmental factors impacting students that might contribute to classroom management issues.
<b>EDTE 4350—TPA Cycle 1 (3 units, virtual)</b>
TPA Cycle 1 provides support and assistance for residents as they prepare to submit their first California Teaching Performance Assessment Cycle. The course coaches and paces the completion of key assessment tasks and provides opportunities for group review and peer editing prior to submission.
<b>EDTE 5800—Resident Clinical Practice (6 units, in person)</b>
Resident Clinical Practice provides clinical coaching to residents during the first semester of their clinical teaching placement. Residents log hours of attendance, support, and coaching.
<b>Spring term</b>
<b>EDEL 5400—Literacy and Social Studies for Diverse Learners (4 units, in person)</b>
In Literacy and Social Studies for Diverse Learners, residents learn theory, research, and practices associated with supporting literacy development while also integrating social studies methods and assessment.
<b>EDEL 5500—Science Methods and Assessment (4 units, in person)</b>
In Science Methods and Assessment, residents are introduced to “curriculum, instructional strategies, and laboratory activities for teaching science” at the elementary level, with an emphasis on inquiry-based learning and instructional strategies that address the needs of all learners.
<b>EDTE 4360—TPA Cycle 2 (3 units, virtual)</b>
TPA Cycle 2 provides support and assistance for residents as they prepare to submit their second California Teaching Performance Assessment Cycle. The course coaches and paces the completion of key assessment tasks and provides opportunities for group review and peer editing prior to submission.
<b>EDTE 5810—Resident Final Clinical Practice (8 units, in person)</b>
Resident Final Clinical Practice provides clinical coaching to residents during the second semester of their clinical teaching placement. Residents log hours of attendance, support, and coaching.

Source: California State University, Bakersfield. (n.d.). [Multiple subject and single subject program matrix and syllabi](#). pp. 124, 138, 187.

## Kern Urban Course Highlights

In alignment with Kern Urban’s mission, coursework focused on developing residents’ pedagogical skills, cultivating cultural competency, and reinforcing connections to the BCSD community. Courses were tailored to the residency experience and featured assignments that required residents to immediately put theory into practice. “Whatever we were learning in [coursework], there was an opportunity to practice it in the residency,” one alumnus shared. Coursework also equipped residents with the skills and knowledge necessary to support the needs of diverse learners, particularly the multilingual population served by BCSD. Because all residents attended clinical placements within BCSD, district norms and curricular materials were incorporated into coursework. (See [Integrating Bakersfield City School District Priorities in Coursework](#).) To illustrate the linkage between coursework and clinical practice, we highlight examples of two courses: Literacy and Social Studies for Diverse Learners and Science Methods and Assessment.

### Integrating Bakersfield City School District Priorities in Coursework

At the time of our study, Kern Urban Teacher Residency (Kern Urban) had worked with the same California State University faculty as program instructors for multiple years, which “contributed to [program] consistency and flow,” according to the residency coordinator (who also teaches coursework). Before the start of each term, program faculty came together to develop a common understanding of program goals and share any programmatic changes. The residency coordinator also met with the faculty multiple times each semester to support alignment across courses.

Kern Urban created a “seamless program,” in part, by incorporating Bakersfield City School District (BCSD) norms and curricular materials into its coursework. The faculty who taught courses connected regularly with the Kern Urban leadership team to learn about district initiatives and how to collaborate around aligning coursework and clinical experiences. Course Instructor Bryan Maddern described how when he first entered the program, he was introduced to the “tight-knit” program community. “We had a Zoom meeting. There were lots of different people there: a representative from the district, other faculty. [The gathering was] just helping me meet everybody, know who to talk to and what to do,” Maddern said. These initial connections supported future collaboration.

In his courses, Maddern periodically welcomed district representatives as guest speakers, and even as coteachers, so they could provide the district perspective on course content. For example, Emily Kremers, BCSD’s Kern Urban Program Specialist, visited his classroom management class to discuss the expectations that Bakersfield City has for their employees around management. This collaboration led to the pair organizing “classroom management walkthroughs” that allowed Kern Urban residents to visit the classrooms of BCSD teachers with strong management practices. In his own instructional practice, Maddern drew on BCSD-specific concepts to ground content discussions. He appreciated the specificity that this allowed: “When I say Twig [a PK–8 science curriculum], everyone knows what I’m talking about, because that’s the curriculum they’re all using.”

Source: Learning Policy Institute analysis of program documents and interviews. (2024).

Literacy and Social Studies for Diverse Learners explored the theory, research, and practices that support students' acquisition of literacy skills, with a focus on grades 3–6. Course content was aligned to the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA) competencies, which were required for a California Multiple Subjects Credential in 2023. The course also integrated social studies methods and assessment and emphasized the “interrelationships among word analysis skills, fluency, vocabulary, academic language, background knowledge, and comprehension.”<sup>14</sup> Course assignments provided opportunities for residents to collaborate on social studies unit designs that explicitly incorporated literacy strategies, and residents also were responsible for planning and delivering a lesson on literacy strategy in their BCSD classroom.

For their signature assignment, residents selected one student from grades 3–5 at their placement site “whose literacy skills are below expected levels” and administered a series of four assessments: a phonics survey, the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessment, a writing assessment, and an Emerging Literacy Survey.<sup>15</sup> They then completed a case study in which they described the student, reported and narrated assessment results, identified areas of strength and need as indicated by the assessments, and identified the instructional implications of these findings by designating specific literacy strategies that could be taught and other instructional practices that might be useful to the student (e.g., grouping, English learner strategies, culturally responsive instruction, differentiation). This process mirrored tasks required of residents on their California Teaching Performance Assessments (CalTPAs).

In Science Methods and Assessment, residents were introduced to “curriculum, instructional strategies, and laboratory activities for teaching science” at the elementary level, with an emphasis on inquiry-based learning and instructional strategies that address the needs of all learners.<sup>16</sup> Residents learned to use the 5E methodology of inquiry-based learning (Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, Evaluate) and the APB (Activity-, Project-, Problem-Based) approach to instruction and, over the course of the semester, completed a signature assignment in which they designed a unit plan that incorporated these methods into a lesson aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards. As they developed the lessons that composed the unit, residents had opportunities to practice teaching their lesson to their peers and to receive preliminary feedback. They then video-recorded themselves implementing the lessons in their placement classroom, reflected on their execution of the TPEs, and received further feedback on implementation from their instructor. In addition to supporting residents' learning, this cycle of video recording, reflection, and feedback was similar to what residents would experience when preparing their Instructional Cycles for the CalTPA.

## **Clinical Experience**

The clinical experience began with an in-person “matching event” in the spring, during which residents rotated through 2- to 3-minute meetings with a series of potential mentors. These meetings gave residents and mentors the opportunity to talk, ask questions, and assess whether or not they might work well together. At the end of the event, residents and mentors submitted answers via Google Forms identifying three individuals who stood out to them as “strong connections,” along with a brief two- or three-sentence explanation of why they felt each connection. These preferences informed the resident-mentor matching process.

Residents attended an Orientation and Resident Institute in late summer, then started their clinical placement either on or shortly before the district's first day of school. Over the course of the school year, residents cotaught with two mentor teachers, spending a full semester in each teacher's classroom.<sup>17</sup> The practice of switching clinical placements midyear was a unique program feature that allowed residents to observe, collaborate with, and learn from two different mentor teachers. They also experienced two different school cultures and broadened the network of educators and administrators in the district with whom they become acquainted, which was both educative and potentially advantageous during the hiring process. The program intentionally assigned residents to both an elementary and a middle school classroom during their residency year, which helped residents develop their understanding of differences in curriculum and instruction across grade bands. This approach had the additional benefit of preparing residents for positions at either the elementary or middle school level, making them more flexible candidates for BCSD.

At the beginning of each semester, mentors introduced residents to students and families as their coteachers. Site administrators were encouraged to reinforce this status with families and school staff and to incorporate the resident into the school community. The program handbook, which was distributed to administrators and mentors at all placement sites, provided suggestions for cultivating a resident's sense of belonging, including small gestures such as "having both teachers' names on the door and on the attendance folder" to signal that the resident was not merely a visitor at the school.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, and like any other district employee, residents received a district email address and a laptop and were included in all staff retreats, professional learning community meetings, events, team meetings, and parent-teacher conferences. Residents could even attend district professional learning events, with the approval of the central office. The ability to participate in these out-of-classroom activities not only prepared residents for the realities of a teacher's work life but also helped them become familiar with site- and district-based systems and culture.

One resident noted how her mentor teacher supported her developing understanding of district systems:

[My mentor] was always very supportive whenever I didn't understand things at the district level. There's a lot of acronyms, a lot of testing, all these things. I would be sitting in meetings, like, "I don't know what they're talking about." Then afterward [my mentor and I] would debrief and she would be like, "Okay, this is what they talked about in the meeting. This is what it means. You will have to worry about this once you start teaching."

Residents benefited from this type of support as they became familiar with new systems and structures. The district also benefited from developing residents' familiarity with district-level practices: Kern Urban graduates, as new hires, faced a significantly smaller learning curve for BCSD policies and initiatives than did teachers prepared through other pathways.

To support the integration of clinical experiences with coursework learning, Kern Urban hosted a monthly Resident Learning Community (RLC). The recurring meeting provided time for Residency Coordinator Holly Gonzales to facilitate discussions about residents' clinical experiences and, at the same time, assess and respond to their emergent needs. During the spring semester, the RLC was also an opportunity for residents to discuss the TPA and the RICA and, near the end of the semester, solidify their induction plans. (See [Resident Supports](#) for more on induction.)

## ***Feedback on and Assessment of Clinical Practice***

Formal clinical coaching and feedback occurred completely via virtual methods. Each month, residents met with their clinical coach via Zoom and typically completed prework that they then reflected on with their coach. The mentor teacher was also invited to attend some meetings, though the mentor typically stayed for only a portion of the time to ensure residents have some degree of confidentiality and privacy in the coaching relationship. The residents' prework often involved sharing a lesson plan and video of themselves implementing the lesson plan, and the resident and coach met to discuss the lesson design and execution.

All program feedback was based on the Danielson Framework for Teaching, and each observation was oriented around a different focal Cluster from the Framework. The progression of focal Clusters scaffolded residents' classroom practices over the course of the residency year, and residents cycled through all Clusters once during the fall semester and again in the spring semester. "It's kind of a gradual approach," said Clinical Coach Jennifer Scheidle. She explained:

First, we talk about clarity and purpose, really getting them to [home] in on that standard and be able to articulate the standard and objective for the students. ... Management of the classroom is next; then we get into the engagement and that cognitive piece that we want them to be engaging in throughout all phases of the instruction. We talk about assessments near the end, because that's when they're really getting into their TPA planning with their TPA instructor. And so we want to make sure that we're supporting that process as well, in addition to them just learning it for their careers.

Mentors also structured their observations and feedback for residents using the Danielson Framework. Twice per month, mentors performed scheduled observations in which they specifically looked for evidence of the focal Danielson Clusters identified on the phase-in schedule. Mentor teachers recorded written feedback from these sessions in a Google Doc that they shared with the resident, the CSUB program coordinator, and the BCSD program supervisor. This feedback included specific action steps for residents to take prior to the next targeted observation, and mentor teachers would informally observe their residents in the intervening time to gauge their success in implementing these action steps. In addition to structuring feedback, the Google Doc allowed program staff to track a resident's progress across the semester and helped inform program staff about areas in which further support might be helpful.

Residents could also be observed by other district employees, including their site principal and BCSD human resources staff. Kern Urban recommended that site principals periodically visit the coteaching classroom to observe residents' practice. BCSD Executive Director of New Teacher Development Mike Havens also encouraged principals to conduct observations that mirror those they perform for their permanent staff, although he established the norm that these observation data not be maintained in a resident's personnel file. "This experience allows residents to go into their first year of teaching knowing exactly what is expected and what the evaluation process looks like," Havens said. Other BCSD staff, including Kern Urban Program Specialist Emily Kremers and BCSD Coordinator of New Teacher Development Valerie Saylor, periodically stepped in for unannounced observations, which enabled them to keep tabs on residents' progress. (See [Partnership](#) for more on the responsibilities of BCSD residency staff.)

## ***Mentor Selection and Development***

CSUB and BCSD representatives jointly selected Kern Urban's mentor teachers from a pool of qualified applicants. Each year, BCSD announced available mentor positions in the district's *Advisory Bulletin*. To be eligible to apply to become a mentor, teachers needed to have a Multiple and/or Single Subject Teaching Credential in California, 3 or more years of teaching experience, strong instructional and classroom management practices, and positive recommendations from peers and site administrators. Additionally, their school site administrator needed to submit a form indicating their interest in having their school become a residency program partner site. Applicants filled out a questionnaire about why they were interested in mentoring, and program representatives from CSUB and BCSD made a classroom visit to evaluate the applicant's pedagogical practice and goodness of fit for the Kern Urban program. After these visits, program representatives deliberated and selected that year's mentor cohort.

Kern Urban invested in mentor talent both financially and through ongoing professional learning that supported mentors' developing coaching practices. In acknowledgment of their work, mentors received a monthly stipend of \$300, for a total of \$3,000 for mentors who host students in both the fall and spring semesters.

In addition to their stipend, mentors could attend up to two conferences, funded by the district, to develop their capacity as teaching professionals and/or as mentors. In addition to this optional professional learning, mentors participated in a monthly Mentor Learning Community (MLC) that was cofacilitated by the CSUB residency coordinator and the BCSD program specialist. These meetings took place during the school day, from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m., which made it easier for mentors to attend. While mentor teachers attended the MLC, residents independently led classroom instruction during their 2-hour absence, which provided them with a valuable opportunity to practice solo teaching.

Kern Urban invested in mentor talent both financially and through ongoing professional learning that supported mentors' developing coaching practices.

At MLC meetings, mentors received updates on program requirements and, in community with other mentors, learned and reflected on their coaching practices. The meeting cofacilitators used this regular convening to inform mentor teachers about upcoming program requirements, such as when residents needed to film an upcoming lesson for their TPAs. They also facilitated activities, which varied over the course of the year, that were designed to develop mentors' coaching capacities. One mentor teacher described their appreciation for having an opportunity to set goals and identify focal areas for coaching, whereas another mentor teacher highlighted the utility of using this time to calibrate the usage of the resident evaluation rubric between mentors. This latter mentor described watching videos of a resident with other mentor teachers and discussing what constituted "basic" versus "proficient" skill demonstration for different rubric categories.

The MLC, by virtue of its regular convening, had the added benefit of developing supportive relationships among individuals engaged in the rewarding yet challenging work of mentoring a resident. It provided a space for less experienced mentors to ask questions, troubleshoot challenges, rehearse difficult conversations, and learn from their peers' mentorship practices. The MLC also built in a regular

opportunity for program representatives to discuss and review mentor expectations and next steps, specifically by reviewing the Danielson domain related to upcoming observation cycles and discussing how mentor teachers could support residents in their coursework and TPA tasks. Mentors found the meetings “genuinely helpful” and viewed the skills taught at these meetings as “vital to the mentorship.”

Mentors received additional, more personalized support from the BCSD program specialist, who made periodic classroom visits to observe and provide feedback on mentors’ coaching practices. During these visits, the specialist observed the mentor–resident relationship and evaluated the mentor’s integration of the resident into classroom instruction and management. If needed, the program specialist would help the mentor teacher identify coaching approaches or coteaching strategies that could support the resident’s development. The BCSD program specialist also provided periodic feedback on mentors’ weekly logs and observations, again with the goal of improving their coaching practices. One mentor teacher appreciated this attention, enthusiastically noting that, “[as mentors,] we give constructive feedback all the time to the resident, but we ourselves can still grow and improve.” A number of mentor teachers were once Kern Urban residents. (See [Kern Urban Graduates Return as Mentor Teachers](#).)

## **Kern Urban Graduates Return as Mentor Teachers**

As a result of the program’s longevity, graduates of early Kern Urban cohorts have garnered enough experience as lead teachers to return to the program as mentors to new generations of Kern Urban Teacher Residency (Kern Urban) residents. Many chose to do so, eager to “pay forward” their positive residency experience. “I feel like I’m such a successful teacher specifically because of this program. So I wanted to give back and complete the circle,” shared one program graduate and current mentor.

There were benefits to having former residents as mentor teachers. First, they were far more intimately acquainted with program norms and goals than the typical teacher, which lowered the learning curve during the mentorship onboarding process. For instance, their familiarity with the Danielson Framework equipped them, from the very beginning of the year, with the conceptual tools they needed to provide feedback that aligned with program emphases.

Second, program graduates drew on their experiences as residents to inform the support they provide to their mentees. The graduates we interviewed for this study shared that they often reflected on which of their own mentors’ practices had and had not worked for them when they were a resident and that their approach to mentorship was shaped by these experiences.

Furthermore, the opportunity to reengage with the program as a mentor reinforced the sense of community that graduates cherished as part of a Kern Urban cohort. As one graduate-turned-mentor told us, “As a resident, you have a community in your cohort, and as a mentor, you have a community in your cohort [of fellow mentors].” The program cultivated mentors’ cohort connectedness at the monthly Mentor Learning Community (MLC) meetings. Although their main goal was to develop coaching practices, MLC meetings also afforded mentors time and structure for developing relationships with one another as they reflected together and found common themes. “[Residency Coordinator Holly Gonzales and Program Specialist Emily Kremers] really try to make sure mentors feel like they are together in this,” said one program graduate and mentor.

Source: Learning Policy Institute analysis of program documents and interviews. (2024).

## Recruitment and Admissions

Kern Urban recruited applicants by advertising the program through several venues. Each year, BCSD and CSUB hosted a page on their respective websites that provided an overview of the Kern Urban program. These pages allowed prospective applicants to fill out an interest form that was automatically sent to Gonzales so she could continue outreach. Program flyers were also posted on CSUB's campus and at the BCSD offices. On campus, academic advisors for CSUB's Department of Liberal Studies informed students about the program as a credentialing option.

Word of mouth from current and former residents was also an effective recruitment tool. As one resident who attended CSUB for her undergraduate degree said, "I had been aware of the residency [throughout] my undergrad. I always heard people mentioning it." When it came time to determine the credentialing pathway she would take, this resident "reached out to an old friend who was in the residency [who] 100% recommended it as such a supportive residency." During the application window, the program hosted virtual informational sessions that interested candidates could attend to learn more about the program details and requirements.

Residents reported that when they were evaluating credentialing pathways, Kern Urban stood out for a number of reasons. Residents most commonly cited the program stipend as a driver of their interest, but they also noted the appeal of the program's extensive clinical experience and high level of support. For example, one resident said he had been considering a traditional preparation program until he saw a sandwich board on CSUB's campus advertising Kern Urban:

[It] had a list of information on it, [including] the stipend, support they offer ... some details talking about Bakersfield City School District and the fact that you work with a mentor teacher over a whole year. Those details were nice to see ... and it kind of sold me on it right there.

For another resident, the deciding factor was "the amount of time that you spent in the classroom." She said:

I did research on the amount of time you spent in the classroom in the traditional pathway and was like, "Well, you're only in the classroom 2 days out of the week, for a few hours." ... But then I looked at [Kern Urban], and it was Monday through Thursday, full commitment, all day. ... That's what motivated me to really pursue [Kern Urban] over the traditional route.

Admission to the program was competitive. For the 2022–23 academic year, Kern Urban had approximately 100 applicants for fewer than 20 spots. The program's competitiveness was viewed as an asset. Saylor recalled that, in the early cohorts, Kern Urban struggled to attract candidates who were "really ready for the program," and, consequently, the program had to make conditional administrative admits to applicants who had not yet met the Basic Skills or Subject Matter Competency requirements. She noted that this did not happen as much anymore because the program can afford to be more intentional in its selection of candidates. Program leaders anticipated that the program's increasing selectivity will contribute to higher retention rates for residency-prepared teachers within BCSD.

Nonetheless, the program continued to provide support to candidates navigating a complicated application process. One resident described this support: "They lined it up perfectly for us. They gave us plenty of emails, plenty of reminders, plenty of explicit instructions" at all steps of the application.

The residency coordinator extended personalized support to interested candidates by making herself available for questions and, when necessary, offering guidance on accessing documents and meeting requirements.

After submitting their applications, candidates participated in a group interview and, in some cases, an additional individual interview, both of which were jointly hosted by CSUB and BCSD. Given the district's financial investment in each resident, BCSD highly valued its involvement in the admissions process. Havens shared:

I want to be a part of choosing our residents because we're going to make a commitment to them, and they are also going to make a commitment to us. And yes, they're Cal State students, but they are going to be BCSD employees, hopefully until they retire.

The program leadership team used collaboratively developed prework, interview protocols, and rubrics to evaluate applicants' suitability for the program. These materials were designed to solicit valued candidate characteristics, including the strength of an applicant's interpersonal communication skills, their experience working with or willingness to work with diverse populations, the depth of their interest in and commitment to a career in education, their openness to diverse perspectives, and their professional language skills. During the interview process, said Havens, "We are very clear with them that we want people [who] are loyal, [who] want to serve the community ... and be part of our community." This emphasis was viewed by Havens as a contributor to the diversity of Kern Urban's cohorts: "Most people [who] want to join the residency are from the community, and many have attended BCSD schools in the past. Therefore, [they're] gonna look like the community, right?"

## Resident Supports

Residents benefited from numerous forms of support designed to facilitate their success within the program and their eventual entry into the teaching profession.

### Financial Support

Residents received a living stipend of between \$18,000 and \$23,000 that was disbursed in monthly installments. The higher stipend was reserved for residents who had chosen to complete an additional authorization in math, science, or bilingual education. In addition to the stipend, residents had the opportunity to earn additional income by substitute teaching; however, they were only allowed to substitute teach for their mentor teacher on days when they were already scheduled to attend their placements (i.e., Monday through Thursday). Hiring residents as substitute teachers also had the bureaucratic benefit that it provided a resident with an employee number that was used by the district to route the resident's stipend.

Residents received financial support from state and federal grants (including the Golden State Teacher Grant, federal Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education [TEACH] Grant, Cal Grant, and California Middle Class Scholarship), internal scholarships, and federal student loans. They were also eligible to be reimbursed for all fees associated with joining the program, including fees for their tuberculosis test, Certificate of Clearance, Emergency 30-Day Substitute Teaching Permit, Live Scan, liability insurance, transcripts, physicals, SAT score verification, and all required California Subject

Examinations for Teachers (CSETs), which together could add up to more than \$1,000. Furthermore, the district offered up to \$3,000 in conference and travel funding, which afforded residents access to additional professional development and training. (See [Table 5](#).)

**Table 5. Kern Urban Financial Supports for Residents, 2022–23**

Source	Amount across residents	Percentage of residents receiving support	Average amount for receiving residents
Local education agency resident stipend	\$360,000	100%	\$18,000
Golden State Teacher Grant <sup>a</sup>	\$104,180	75%	\$6,945
Federal TEACH Grant <sup>a</sup>	\$3,772	12.5%	\$1,509
Cal Grant <sup>a</sup>	\$22,526	18.75%	\$6,006
California Middle Class Scholarship <sup>a</sup>	\$4,919	68.75%	\$358
California State University, Bakersfield scholarships	\$1,286	25%	\$257
Local education agency supplemental supports (e.g., testing fees)	\$11,000	100%	\$550
Federal loans	\$61,654	37.5%	\$8,221

<sup>a</sup> Not all residents are eligible for all grant types. Golden State Teacher Grant maximum award: \$20,000; Federal Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant maximum award: \$3,772; Cal Grant Teaching Credential Program maximum award: \$10,868 for students at private universities, \$7,390 for California State University students (available for individuals within 15 months of completing an undergraduate degree); California Middle Class Scholarship maximum award: varies based on student's family earnings.

Source: Personal email with Holly Gonzales, Kern Urban Teacher Residency Coordinator. (2023, August 22).

## Credentialing Support

Residents also benefited from robust support for RICA and TPA exams that was embedded in program coursework. Literacy courses were explicitly aligned to RICA Competencies, and instructors created additional opportunities for preparation and review. TPA preparation was taken particularly seriously by the program. In addition to the specific TPA preparation courses that residents took each semester, program faculty and clinical coaches were trained in the requirements of the TPA Cycles and integrated the assessment's language and structure into coursework and coaching. For example, the signature assignment of the course Literacy and Social Studies for Diverse Learners required residents to develop a unit plan. To enhance the assignment's alignment with the TPA, the program began calling it a "Learning Segment," in alignment with TPA language, and adopted the planning template format used for

TPA Cycle 2. Near the deadlines for TPA submission, clinical coaches held office hours so they could offer additional support for residents as they worked on their submissions, and assignments that residents complete as part of their fieldwork were similarly designed to prepare them for the emphasis on lesson planning and instruction in TPA Cycle 1.

## Cohort Support

Residents valued the relationships they developed as part of the Kern Urban residency cohort. Friday coursework was the backbone of the cohort experience. “I really look forward to Fridays because I like seeing everyone’s faces and talking to everyone,” said one resident. Outside of coursework, residents communicated frequently over messaging apps, which they used to ask questions, plan gatherings, and celebrate licensing milestones. When residents were assigned a new mentor at the midyear mark, they often turned to their peer who had been in their new mentor’s classroom the previous semester for help understanding classroom dynamics. Residents described asking for and sharing insight about students in the class—“Like, okay, tell me, how do I engage so-and-so? Or like, I noticed that so-and-so does this. What did you do to connect?”—which provided a solid foundation for future collaboration with fellow teachers. Residents looked forward to entering the field with their cohort at the conclusion of the residency. One resident shared, “I’ve made so many teacher friends, and I really hope I get placed with one of my cohort residents when I get my job because, like, I just love ’em all. I really do.”

The importance of the cohort was emphasized by program graduates, one of whom said, “A system of support is one of the main things, for me, that I’ve gotten from the program.” Kern Urban graduates described the cohort bond as enduring beyond the completion of the program. One graduate remembered how comforting it felt to see cohort members during the induction program: “Seeing our cohort there kind of made me feel more comfortable and like I wasn’t alone in a crowd of new teachers. I was like, ‘Oh, friendly faces!’”

The Kern Urban bond extended beyond individual cohorts. Graduates felt a sense that they were part of an inter-cohort Kern Urban “family.” The biggest benefit of the program, communicated one graduate-turned-mentor, is “to have a network of teachers around you.” Another teacher shared a similar sentiment:

It just builds a different community on top of the community we already have in our district. ... You kind of make this second family that allows you guys to share this experience and honor that you were part of the program.

Some graduates worked at the same school site as one of their mentor teachers and continued going to them for advice, even years into their teaching career. One resident described the joy and immediate bond of discovering that a colleague was a fellow Kern Urban graduate: “I was like, Oh my gosh! We were already cool, but now, like, I get you.”

## Hiring and Induction Support

During the hiring process, Kern Urban residents benefited from the district's attempt to create, as Saylor put it, "as seamless as possible a pathway for them" as they moved from the residency into a full-time teaching position and the district's induction program. Mentor teachers acted as a reference for their site principal, wrote letters of recommendation for positions outside of the immediate school site, and helped residents prepare for interviews by asking them practice questions and providing feedback on their demonstration lessons. Kern Urban's reputation was itself an asset as well: "Principals want to hire people who have come through the residency," said Saylor.

Once residents were hired, they transitioned into BCSD's induction program, which the district provided at no cost to all newly credentialed teachers. The induction program was facilitated by the Department of New Teacher Development, the same department that oversaw the Kern Urban program. Because of the induction staff's familiarity with Kern Urban residents, the quality of their preparation, and their extensive clinical experience, the district was willing to grant graduates the opportunity to take an "early completion" option for induction, which was written into the partnership memorandum of understanding (MOU). The early completion option for induction gave residency graduates the option to skip the first year of the induction program and proceed directly into the second year. One graduate who took the early completion option found the induction program "very easy" because of the high expectations she had experienced in her Kern Urban coursework. For residents who preferred the full 2 years of induction mentorship, the traditional induction program was also an option.<sup>19</sup>

Kern Urban residents' program experiences also set them up for success as teachers in BCSD. By virtue of the program's close collaboration with district staff and the fact that coursework was hosted in district buildings, Kern Urban residents learned about district resources that teachers who come through different pathways were often unaware of. "We are privy to insider things that it takes people a lot of years to figure out in the district, but we get to see it the first year," said one program graduate. One example provided by this graduate was the Curriculum Lab, a resource that aims to help teachers and other stakeholders "make better use of existing instructional materials, programs, and equipment."<sup>20</sup> During this graduate's Kern Urban residency, district staff showed her cohort around the Lab and introduced them to the available services. In contrast, she noted that the non-Kern Urban first-year teacher she was mentoring for induction "didn't even know about [this resource] or where it was because no one took her there."

## Partnership

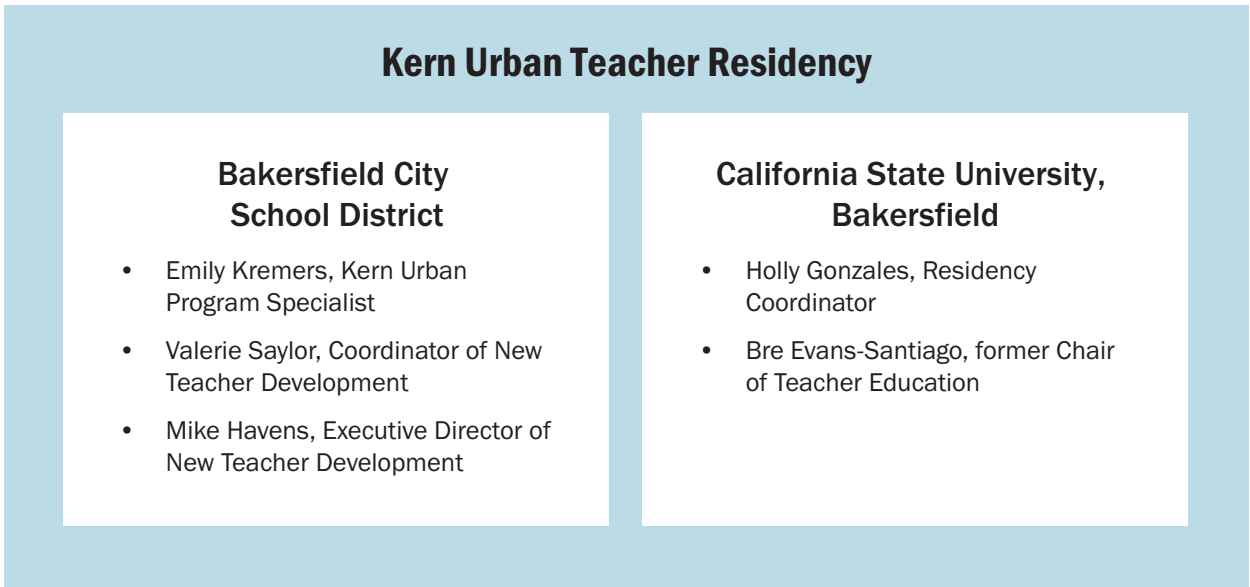
According to program leaders, partnership and communication were at the core of Kern Urban's success. Partnership processes and structures strengthened collaboration between the university and the district and ensured continuity despite staffing turnover and replacement. Havens shared his insights about Kern Urban's success:

I believe that some school districts ... view a residency as student teaching. It is just so much more. We have so many structures in place with [Kern Urban], from the Phase-In Schedule to our monthly trainings. It's very focused; it's very structured. And I think being able to communicate all those structures to your superintendent's cabinet and board is huge, because you're going to need that support monetarily at some point when grant dollars expire.

The program leadership team—which included Mike Havens, BCSD Executive Director of New Teacher Development; Valerie Saylor, BCSD Coordinator of New Teacher Development; Emily Kremers, BCSD Kern Urban Program Specialist; Holly Gonzales, CSUB Kern Urban Residency Coordinator; and Bre Evans-Santiago, CSUB’s former Chair of the Department of Teacher Education (see [Figure 2](#))—gathered for 90-minute biweekly meetings. The team maintained an active agenda that all leadership team members could contribute to between meetings. Topics discussed included mentor development, resident development, observation data, supplies and materials, budgets, upcoming events, mentor and resident conferences and travel, exam outcomes, and requests for support between team members.

Decision-making was a collaborative process, absent an explicit governance structure dictating who would have the final say. “When we have a question, or we don’t agree, we revisit the [residency’s] mission and vision, because that has to be where we anchor our decision,” said Gonzales. Havens noted that negotiating constructive partnership conflicts was “not always easy, because everyone has their own wishes and desires. But if you are communicative and are willing to really sit down at the table and talk regularly, I don’t know if there’s anything better than [that kind of] true partnership.”

**Figure 2. Kern Urban Leadership Team, 2022–23**



Source: Learning Policy Institute. (2024).

The partners articulated the commitments taken on by each party in a yearly letter of understanding. Roles and responsibilities were delineated with greater specificity in a document that detailed the division of responsibilities between the BCSD program specialist and the CSUB program coordinator, including which responsibilities would be managed jointly between the two roles. (See [Figure 3](#).) Constructive conflicts naturally arose as both partner organizations grew and changed, and role divisions between the LEA and institution of higher education periodically required renegotiation.

In BCSD, the residency existed under the purview of the Department of New Teacher Development. The department's executive director was highly invested and involved in the residency. "Whenever residency discussions take place, I'm there 90% of the time," Havens shared. Havens viewed his level of involvement as a contributor to the program's sustainability. "Because I'm able to be so hands-on with the program, I am able to communicate clearly with our superintendent, and our superintendent is able to communicate clearly with our board how important it is to have a residency like this and how effective it is." Saylor, the Coordinator of New Teacher Development, and Kremers, BCSD's Kern Urban Program Specialist, managed the day-to-day residency operations with additional clerical support.

Within CSUB, the partnership was led by Gonzales, the Residency Coordinator. In her capacity as Kern Urban Residency Coordinator, Gonzales served as a liaison between the district and the university, led program recruitment, facilitated ongoing professional development for mentors and residents, and supported program implementation and logistics. She also served as the go-to person for all things residency related, met with program faculty to ensure vision alignment in coursework, coordinated resident learning communities, and even acted as an academic advisor to ensure residents were progressing on schedule through the program. In addition to her role as coordinator—which Gonzales described as "a full-time job all by itself," although it was officially supposed to be only 25% of her job—Gonzales also served as a clinical coach for some Kern Urban residents and taught coursework for the cohort. This suite of responsibilities regularly required Gonzales to work extended hours, a practice that can be difficult to sustain over time.

On the CSUB side, the program was also supported by an additional clinical coach, Scheidle, and the faculty who taught the Kern Urban sections of courses. Both Gonzales and Scheidle were former BCSD employees, and, given the relationships and deep understanding of district culture that they brought to their work at CSUB, their experience working within the partner district was considered an asset to the program.

Gonzales and Kremers, who collaborated closely to plan and facilitate many program events, met on a weekly basis (or more frequently if needed) and maintained an ongoing task management list to keep track of responsibilities. Gonzales, Kremers, and Saylor remained in contact outside of meeting times via email or by phone so they could address emergent needs and issues.

**Figure 3. Division of Kern Urban Responsibilities Between Bakersfield City School District and CSUB**

CSUB residency coordinator responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage resident recruitment and support with marketing.</li> <li>• Consult with university administrators as needed and update the Department of Teacher Education about Kern Urban in monthly faculty meetings.</li> <li>• Prepare and monitor resident teachers' individualized program plans and monitor progress with support from the CSUB credentials analyst.</li> <li>• Oversee residents' admissions interview preparation, planning, and facilitation, ensuring all rubrics are updated and candidate documentation and clearance are submitted.</li> <li>• Serve as residents' advisor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Oversee onboarding process for CSUB credential program.</li> <li>- Register residents for coursework.</li> <li>- Monitor academics and program progress.</li> <li>- Create and monitor improvement plans for resident teachers as needed.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Lead program coursework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promote the articulation of curricula and syllabi development.</li> <li>- Meet with program faculty before each term and as needed to monitor progress toward meeting program goals.</li> <li>- Observe course meetings and obtain documentation of course materials to ensure learning goals are met.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Provide coteaching training at orientation and during monthly meetings.</li> <li>• Monitor resident and mentor teacher coteaching practices and provide feedback.</li> <li>• Prepare and facilitate Danielson Framework training and scoring calibration for clinical coaches and mentor teachers.</li> </ul>
BCSD program specialist responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage mentor recruitment and support (e.g., through website, signage, social media).</li> <li>• Consult with district administrators as needed.</li> <li>• Plan and prepare reports and special projects as assigned that relate to the residency, such as updating the program phase-in schedule; handbook; calendar; or other program-related forms, surveys, and slides.</li> <li>• Provide clerical support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Send reminders, calendar reminders, event invitations, and other communications.</li> <li>- Manage reimbursements.</li> <li>- Monitor and assist with the preparation of spending requisitions.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Oversee observations and coaching: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prepare and monitor the submission of observation forms, ensuring mentor teachers submit accurate, timely data.</li> <li>- Observe and provide evidence-based feedback to mentors and the coteaching team.</li> <li>- Prepare and monitor the submission of coaching logs.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Manage residents' technology usage by checking in and out devices, supporting technology issues, managing district email requests, and consulting with the district information technology department as needed.</li> <li>• Support human resources with onboarding (e.g., substitute documentation).</li> </ul>

Joint responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coplan and cofacilitate professional development opportunities, including orientation and monthly meetings.</li> <li>• Cofacilitate the resident and mentor interview processes.</li> <li>• Place and monitor resident-mentor teacher pairings.</li> <li>• Plan and maintain the program calendar of events and program handbook.</li> <li>• Maintain, analyze, and disseminate observational data collected for the residency to practice continuous improvement.</li> <li>• Cofacilitate meetings with coteaching teams to help them solve problems and to provide support.</li> <li>• Cofacilitate the following meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Weekly Tuesday meetings</li> <li>- Biweekly Thursday leadership meetings</li> <li>- Partnership meetings</li> <li>- Other meetings as needed</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Oversee human resources onboarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CSUB coordinator sends an offer to the admitted resident.</li> <li>- BCSD specialist sends an email with the agreement and a step-by-step explanation of the Emergency 30-Day Substitute Teaching Permit process.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Note: BCSD = Bakersfield City School District; CSUB = California State University, Bakersfield.  
Source: Adapted from Kern Urban Teacher Residency. (2023). *2023–24 roles and responsibilities: Specialist and coordinator*.

Three times each year, the program leadership team hosted a partnership meeting that included the superintendent, the assistant superintendent of educational services, the assistant head of HR, and CSUB’s dean of education. During these meetings, the leadership team shared data on resident demographics and retention and identified residents’ successes and the ongoing challenges they and the program were facing. These meetings provided an opportunity for the program leadership to highlight the program’s ongoing contribution to district staffing while key district stakeholders were at the table. These individuals, particularly the superintendent, could then share this information with the district board of education, which made funding decisions for the program. The program also provided written reports directly to the board and invited board members to attend Kern Urban’s end-of-year celebration. Maintaining the support of district leadership was critical to the program’s success. “If the board and the superintendent believe in [the program], grants or no grants, it’s going to be funded,” said Havens.

### Program Outcomes

As of the 2022–23 school year, 92% of the total 114 Kern Urban residency graduates continued to work in BCSD. Program graduates were well prepared to meet the needs of the district. The difference between Kern Urban graduates and traditionally prepared early-career teachers was obvious, shared Saylor: “The [district’s administrative

As of the 2022–23 school year, 92% of the total 114 Kern Urban residency graduates continued to work in BCSD.

team], they walk sites often, including the superintendent. Often I'll get the email or the call like ... 'We were in so-and-so's classroom, and she looks like a fifth-year teacher, though I know she just finished Kern Urban.'"

Graduates themselves valued their experiences during the residency year a great deal and viewed them as establishing a strong foundation for their transition into their first role as a teacher of record. "You can't put a price on experience, really," said one Kern Urban graduate. The fact that all graduates completed their residency in the district in which they were then hired yielded additional benefits: They entered their first year of teaching already acquainted with district personnel, familiar with district norms, and equipped with, as Havens put it, the "BCSD lexicon." Rather than spending time and energy adjusting to and learning unfamiliar district systems, graduates could focus on creating high-quality educational experiences for their students. Residents' familiarity with coteaching models was understood as another major strength that distinguished them from graduates of other teacher preparation programs. In instances in which they were paired with an education specialist, even if they had never worked with one before, their experience with coteaching was viewed as having the potential to make the pairing a more productive collaboration.

The density of Kern Urban graduates within specific school sites and in the district writ large has, according to district personnel, contributed to shifts in school culture. "We have school campuses that talk about just changing the entire school culture by having a cohort of former residents on their campus," said Saylor. In recent years, the residency has been mobilized as something of a school turn-around strategy within BCSD. The district's practice of strategically placing residents in focus schools (i.e., schools eligible for differentiated assistance), generally in groups of three or four, helped prepare residents to serve in these contexts. When sites hired multiple Kern Urban graduates, they noted significant and positive changes in school culture. "We have a school that has over 10 [Kern Urban graduates] on their staff of something like 25 people. [The principal] just raves about the dynamic, the family dynamic, that they've brought in and infused into the rest of the staff. [They] really have shifted the culture for the better," shared Gonzales. Havens noted, "What we've seen is that [hiring Kern Urban graduates] has been the quickest way to transform school culture."

## Financial Model

When the NGEI grant that funded the program's start-up came to an end, the district stepped in to continue financing the program by writing it into their Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) and apportioning Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) funds. It was "too good of a thing to let it die," remembered Gonzales. As the residency moved off grant funding and toward a district-funded model, the program had to rethink how to provide residents' stipends. Previously, the grant money had flowed through CSUB to the resident, but now that the district funded the program, they needed to address the question of how to disburse funds. The solution determined by the HR department was to hire residents as substitute teachers so that they were enrolled as district payees and could thus receive stipend payments from the district. Due to the rigorous schedule of the Kern Urban program, however, residents were limited to substitute teaching only for their mentor teacher on days when they were scheduled to attend their placement.

As of the 2022–23 academic year, BCSD invested between \$750,000 and \$1.2 million of its LCFF funding each year in the continued operation of the residency. "As a district, we are invested, and this is the right model to grow teachers. The economics definitely is more costly. The output of high-quality

teachers in our classrooms is easily worth the monetary cost,” said BCSD Superintendent Mark Luque.<sup>21</sup> The district allocated between \$18,000 and \$23,000 for each resident’s stipend and provided an additional \$300 per month as a mentor stipend. As part of the memorandum of understanding between the district and CSUB, BCSD committed to providing facility usage without a fee, which minimized program costs by allowing CSUB to hold Kern Urban coursework on-site at BCSD facilities.

On the university side, CSUB’s ongoing allocation of faculty staffing capacity and administrative support was essential to the program’s continued operation. (See [Table 6.](#)) Despite these investments, the program itself had no budget for program-related purchases—for instance, maintaining a program website or staff professional learning—which was a point of frustration for both Gonzales and her BCSD colleagues. From Gonzales’s perspective, the program required more financial support from CSUB to fully engage in the project of continuous improvement: “You have to keep improving and changing,” she noted. Gonzales described her own 25% full-time equivalent appointment toward residency coordination as insufficient to support day-to-day program management, let alone plan for the future or engagement in ongoing professional learning. This was one of the few complaints we heard about the program’s financial supports.

However, in the long term, any such staffing crunches will have to be attended to with real money, instead of relying on individuals’ ample, but finite, goodwill, especially if the program is to continue to grow. Program coordinators, with the support of department chairs and deans, can also advocate for the university to increase funding or allocate more staff capacity toward residency coordination by increasing the percentage of their full-time equivalent appointment that goes toward coordination. Doing so is especially important given the community partnerships that residencies promote, as many institutions of higher education (IHEs), including those in the California State University system, aim to “enrich” and “serve” the communities where they are located.<sup>22</sup> Programs might consider negotiating with their LEA partners for additional funding to support IHE staffing or for access to other support such as an administrative assistant.

BCSD received a 5-year, \$300,000 Commission on Teacher Credentialing Teacher Residency Expansion Grant in 2018 to add Single Subject and Bilingual authorization pathways to the residency, but they have since paused the Bilingual authorization program. “The structure was just not working,” said Saylor. Adding the authorization to an already accelerated preparation timeline left residents stressed and often unable to complete the authorization by the end of the program. As a work-around, the district initiated another partnership with CSUB, outside of the residency, that allowed already credentialed teachers in the district to add Bilingual authorization with funding from the district. The Single Subject pathway, too, had not yet taken off at the time of our study: While the expansion grant funded one Single Subject resident during the 2022–23 school year, this candidate had to leave the program, so the funding was not in use for the latter half of that school year.

Program representatives proudly noted that during this period, residency stipends were funded 100% by the district, with CSUB contributing staffing resources for program coordination, clinical coaching, and instruction for residency coursework, providing a unique example of a residency sustained without reliance on grant funds.

**Table 6. Kern Urban Annual Revenues and Expenditures per Resident**

Revenues/ expenses	Category	California State University, Bakersfield	Bakersfield City School District
Revenues	Tuition	\$8,400	
	Local Control Funding Formula		\$38,800
Total revenues		\$8,400	\$38,000
Expenses	Administration and staff	\$10,000	\$13,800
	Academic faculty	\$7,500	
	Recruitment and student support staff	\$20	\$100
	Direct resident supports (e.g., scholarships, compelling needs, supplemental; average cost)		\$300
	Resident living stipends (average)		\$18,000
	Mentor teacher stipends (average)		\$3,000
	Resident and mentor supplies		\$1,600
	Resident and mentor travel and conference costs		\$2,000
Total expenses		\$17,520	\$38,800

Note: Cohort size = 20. CSUB = California State University, Bakersfield; LEA = local education agency.

Source: Personal email with Holly Gonzales, Kern Urban Residency Coordinator. (2023, August 22).

## Continuous Improvement

Despite the program’s long tenure, program leadership remained committed to continuous improvement. “It can’t just be, ‘We already made a phase-in for Year 1 and it’s going to work in Year 7,’” noted Gonzales. “You have to keep improving and changing.” Kern Urban graduates who returned to the program as mentor teachers expressed amazement at how many changes had been implemented since their time as residents. One observed, “Every year, they tweak things based on feedback, which is amazing. ... This program has come so far.”

Feedback and data were collected in numerous forms (see [Table 7](#)). During the residency year, the program kept close tabs on residents’ development by collecting ongoing feedback from mentor teachers, midyear surveys from site principals, and formal observation data from clinical coaches. Informal,

qualitative data were also very important to the program. “Honestly, a lot of information just comes from having conversations with mentors and residents and site principals,” said Saylor. If data suggested that residents required additional support in a given area, program leads were not afraid to course-correct midyear. At the conclusion of the program, residents completed an end-of-year NCTR survey and the exit survey from the chancellor’s office to provide feedback on their experiences, which the program also used to support its planning for the following year.

**Table 7. Kern Urban Data Collection for Continuous Improvement**

Data collection	Source	Timing
Resident demographic data	Residents	Program entry
Informal observation feedback	Mentor teachers	Twice per month
Formal observation feedback	Clinical coach	Monthly
Survey	Site principals	Midyear
Informal conversations	Mentor teachers, site principals	No established cadence
NCTR survey	Residents	End-of-year
Chancellor’s office exit survey	Residents	End-of-year
Residents’ TPA and RICA attempts	California Commission on Teacher Credentialing	As available
Credential attainment	California Commission on Teacher Credentialing	As available
Graduate retention rates	Bakersfield City School District	Yearly

Note: NCTR = National Center for Teacher Residencies; RICA = Reading Instruction Competence Assessment; TPA = Teaching Performance Assessment.

Source: Learning Policy Institute analysis of program documents and interviews. (2024).

Program leadership continued to collect data on residents after they left the program as well. Gonzales was particularly enthusiastic about the utility of “tracking anything and everything about your completers,” including, among other things, residents’ race and ethnicity, how many attempts of the TPA and RICA residents made, and how many residents complete the program with their credential in hand. “Those are the pieces that are going to help you identify areas of concern, or trends, or gaps” that might not otherwise be noted by program stakeholders, said Gonzales. Collecting such data also allowed the program to, she continued, “do your best storytelling of what we have done and what we can do and why we should sustain this program.” The data from these diverse sources were evaluated in an ongoing fashion by program leadership, and findings were discussed in depth at partnership meetings.

The successes and challenges identified through the analysis of program data informed ongoing program modification. Some areas required ongoing tweaking from year to year, such as the continuous improvement of alignment between coursework and clinical experiences and the discernment of topics that should be addressed by professional learning for residents and mentors. Other major program changes were initiated in response to resident, mentor, or district partner feedback.

For example, as discussed in the [Resident Supports](#) section, in the program's early years, there was a system in place in which all first-year teachers who had completed the residency were guaranteed the early completion option for induction. This provision had been implemented at the behest of CSUB as a benefit of the residency pathway. "What we learned over time is that not every resident benefits from that, and some don't even want it," shared Saylor. As a result, the program shifted to make early completion an option for those who wished to take it, whereas others could choose to complete the full 2-year process. More recently, this aspect has shifted even more: The program opted to de-emphasize the early completion option in response to data suggesting that all residency-prepared teachers could benefit from the full 2 years of mentoring provided through the induction program. In another instance, mentor teachers provided feedback that mentor community-building suffered when mentor learning communities occurred in a virtual environment. The following year, program leaders transitioned back to in-person meetings. These changes, and the many other pivots made by program leaders, had only been possible because of the diligent collection and analysis of data from all stakeholders involved in the residency program.

In addition to using data for internal continuous improvement, Kern Urban staff shared program data with high-level district leadership at partnership meetings. The program's robust data collection efforts allowed them to tell a compelling story about the ways that residency outcomes aligned with district goals (e.g., to diversify the teacher workforce, increase teacher retention). Transparent, data-based communication with the high-level district leaders invited conversations about how the residency could continually refine programming to best meet the district's talent development needs, link up with other district systems, and prepare teachers who would effectively serve BCSD students.

## Next Steps

Program leaders continued to prioritize continuous improvement as they planned for the future. As of the 2022–23 school year, Kern Urban's 5-year retention rate was 78%, which indicates that most graduates remain in the district beyond the end of their 4-year service requirement. Although this is a laudable achievement in itself, program leaders aimed to increase the retention rate to 90% in the coming years. Saylor was optimistic about this goal, noting that retention had already improved as Kern Urban admissions became more competitive. A more competitive admissions process allowed Kern Urban representatives to select candidates who were prepared to begin the credentialing process and thus, according to Saylor, more likely to complete the program and experience success in their first year of teaching. Beyond the admissions process, CSUB and BCSD program leaders continue to collaborate to ensure residents have the skills and knowledge that prepares them to enter into—and persist in—the teaching profession as members of the BCSD community.

Kern Urban's leaders recognized the importance of strong mentorship in the residency experience. With this in mind, Gonzales and Kremers continued to refine their approach to professional development for mentor teachers. "We can't assume they come to us with [coaching capacity]. So how are we building that?" asked Gonzales. Gonzales and Kremers listened carefully to the expressed needs and feedback of current and former mentor teachers and revised content, timing, and support accordingly. Nonetheless, they recognized that they are still growing their practice in this area.

Relatedly, the program faced the challenge of recruiting mentors who were motivated to put in the time and work that the role requires. Program leaders continued to think through how they might appropriately compensate mentor teachers for their service, both including and extending beyond financial remuneration. Developing a high-quality program for mentor professional learning and building a robust community within mentor cohorts were both part of the program's attempt to ensure that mentor teachers perceive benefits and experience professional growth and fulfillment through their engagement with the Kern Urban program.

While the program's district-sustained funding structure is the object of envy for other residencies, Kern Urban's leaders nonetheless aimed to secure additional funding sources. Specifically, Gonzales hoped to mobilize additional funding to support program leadership development and continuous improvement. Gonzales noted that, as a residency lead, she lacked opportunities for professional development, due in part to a lack of travel funding—though it was also the case that as a relatively senior residency lead, Gonzales often found herself tapped to *provide* rather than *receive* professional development. This was the case in CSUB's Teacher Residency Consortium, which Gonzales led, and also in conjunction with the Residency Lab, where she acted as coach and was a frequent presenter. Attending NCTR meetings gave her additional opportunities to connect with role-alike peers at other institutions, which Gonzales appreciated, but she nonetheless looked for further opportunities to continually improve both her own leadership practice and Kern Urban programming. "If you want a program to really invest time and care in continuous improvement" and to appropriately serve both higher education and K–12 students, "there's going to have to be a lot of time and care put into it, and the compensation should be there for those types of things," said Gonzales.

# Teacher Residency for Rural Education

The Teacher Residency for Rural Education (TRRE) is a 12- to 15-month graduate-level program that was offered during the 2022–23 school year through a partnership between the California Center on Teaching Careers at the Tulare County Office of Education (TCOE) and California State University, Bakersfield (CSUB). Over 3 semesters, TRRE residents worked toward a Single Subject credential in math, science, or English. Residents had the option to complete an additional semester of coursework to receive a Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction. Residents committed to teaching in a partner district for 3 years after they completed the residency program.

The program, which launched in 2020, is notable for its focus on preparing educators to serve in rural settings, specifically within the Tulare region of California, and it aims to recruit candidates who already live in or have roots in the communities where they will one day serve. “Most of our students in the residency program [graduated] from the school district that they’re placed in,” said Chai Phannaphob, a CSUB faculty member who supported TRRE. TRRE’s localized recruitment strategy helped create resident cohorts that mirror the racial, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic demographics of students in partner districts. These existing connections were bolstered by an emphasis in coursework on the pedagogical importance of teachers knowing and understanding the communities in which they work and providing instruction that meets the needs of predominantly multilingual student populations. Furthermore, the program hoped to promote retention through its localized recruitment, building on the idea that residents from the region will have greater motivation to remain there as teachers.

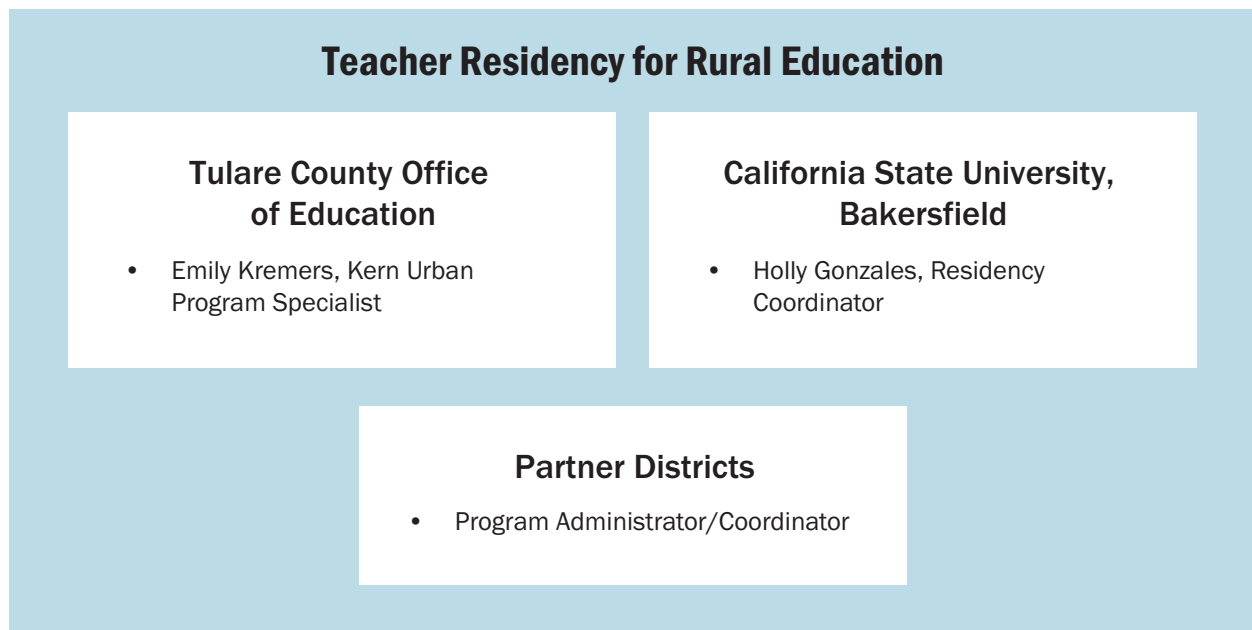
To serve candidates in the Tulare region, TRRE had to “bring the university to the students,” as TRRE’s then-Residency Coordinator, Adriana Cervantes-González, put it. CSUB’s campus is located nearly 70 miles from the Tulare region—a commute that would make participation difficult, if not impossible, for individuals who live in the Tulare region and are interested in entering teaching. To

To serve candidates in the Tulare region, TRRE had to “bring the university to the students.”

enable these individuals to participate, the program held all courses in TCOE office buildings, which were located significantly closer to the candidates’ homes and the schools in which they completed their clinical placements. Through this practice, TRRE created access for individuals in rural communities and regions who would otherwise experience greater difficulty in accessing high-quality teacher preparation.

TRRE also features a unique partnership with a county office of education (see [Figure 4](#)). TCOE secured the 2019 Teacher Quality Partnership grant that helped launch the program and served as the fiscal lead of the residency. TCOE also played a central role in establishing and managing partnerships with local districts, drawing on institutional knowledge of districts’ staffing needs and long-standing relationships with central office administrators. By coordinating multiple district partners, TCOE avoided the challenge experienced by a previous CSUB rural-focused residency—namely, that single rural districts typically do not hire enough teachers each year to sustain a residency program.<sup>23</sup> When a TRRE resident’s clinical placement district lacked openings, TCOE helped them connect with human resources representatives in other partner districts who were looking to hire.

**Figure 4. TRRE Leadership Team, 2022–23**



Source: Learning Policy Institute. (2024).

The program also stood out among CSUB residencies for its inclusion of an optional master's degree. In Cohorts 1 and 2, 74% of residents pursued the MA immediately following their credential completion. The option provided residents with the opportunity to develop further expertise in curriculum and instruction and to increase their base teaching salary by close to \$5,000. In addition to helping residents establish greater financial stability as educators from early in their career, this optional master's degree also positioned them to eventually move into teacher leadership roles, which would allow them to advance in their careers while remaining in the classroom. One resident expressed enthusiasm that the master's degree could be packaged into the residency experience: "Being able to end your credentialing program with a guaranteed job *and* a master's in education that'll help you further your career? Those are things you wouldn't get in another program."

Although it was a relatively young residency program at the time of our study, TRRE had already demonstrated promising outcomes by creating a pathway into teaching for individuals from groups that have been historically marginalized in the profession. During the 2022–23 academic year, 80% of residents identified as people of color. Out of all residents, 66.0% identified as Hispanic or Latino/a, 15.0% as White, 1.7% as Black or African American, 3.4% as Asian or Asian American, and 6.7% with two or more racial groups (7.2% identified as unknown or did not specify). Notably, the districts with which the program partners serve predominantly Hispanic or Latino/a student populations. About three quarters (74%) of residents completed the credentialing program on time, and 95% completed it within 2 years. Program graduates were hired into positions in local districts at high rates: Nearly all (94%) accepted a position in a local high-need school, and each program graduate was certified in a subject area of high need for these districts. Although the program had not, at the time of our study, existed long enough to fully understand its impact on retention, all five residents from the first cohort (2020–21) were still teaching in a partner district as of the 2023–24 school year. [Table 8](#) provides a summary of the TRRE program.

**Table 8. TRRE Residency Summary, 2022–23**

Characteristic	Description
Program length	12–15 months (including foundational coursework)
Credentials offered	Single Subject (Grades 6–12): math, science, English
Master's degree	Optional <sup>a</sup> Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction with an additional 3 months of coursework
2022–23 program cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tuition: \$10,340 (credential only; MA costs additional \$7,740)</li> <li>• Books and supplies: \$1,152<sup>b</sup></li> <li>• Test/Certification fees: \$1,439<sup>c</sup></li> <li>• Housing/Food/Transportation/Misc.: \$22,644<sup>d</sup></li> </ul>
Financial supports for residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Living stipend: \$35,000</li> <li>• Grants: up to \$31,390 (need- and eligibility-based)<sup>e</sup></li> <li>• Scholarships: up to \$20,028 (need- and eligibility-based)<sup>f</sup></li> <li>• Substitute teaching: yes (up to \$170/week)</li> </ul>
Resident enrollment	15
Racial demographics of residents (cumulative)	3.4% Asian or Asian American; 1.7% Black or African American; 66.0% Hispanic or Latino/a; 15.0% White; 6.7% two or more races (7.2% race/ethnicity unknown or not specified)
Clinical experience	3 days per week, August–June
1-year program completion rate (2020–2023)	74% (95% 2-year completion rate)
Percentage of graduates with full-time employment in local high-need schools (2020–2023)	94%
2-year retention rate for 2021 program graduates in high-need schools	100% ( <i>n</i> = 5)

<sup>a</sup> The federal Teacher Quality Partnership grant requires teacher residency program design to include “rigorous graduate-level course work leading to a master’s degree” that can be completed in 18 months. While the master’s degree required an additional semester of coursework, Teacher Residency for Rural Education credential courses were designed as graduate-level courses and count toward the master’s degree.

<sup>b</sup> Estimate based on average expenses reported by California students on the 2018–19 Student Expenses and Resource Survey, adjusted for inflation.

<sup>c</sup> Learning Policy Institute estimate that includes California Basic Educational Skills Test, California Subject Examinations for Teachers, Reading Instruction Competence Assessment, edTPA, U.S. Constitution Exam, Emergency 30-Day Substitute Teaching Permit, Preliminary Credential, Certificate of Clearance, CPR certification, tuberculosis test, and Live Scan.

<sup>d</sup> Based on the 2022–23 [California Student Aid Commission Student Expense Budget](#).

<sup>e</sup> \$20,000 (Golden State Teacher Grant) + \$7,390 (Cal Grant for California State University system) + \$4,000 (federal Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education Grant).

<sup>f</sup> \$10,000 (California State University Robert Noyce Scholarship) + \$5,000 (CSU Residency Year Scholarship) + \$5,028 (California Middle Class Scholarship; dependent on family income).

Sources: California Student Aid Commission. [Middle Class Scholarship \(MCS\)](#). (accessed 07/20/24); California Student Aid Commission. [What are the Cal Grant Award amounts](#). (accessed 07/20/24); California Student Aid Commission. (2021). [2022–23 student expense budgets](#); California State University. [Robert Noyce Scholarships](#). (accessed 07/20/24); California State University. [CSU Residency Year Scholarship](#). (accessed 07/20/24).

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## Background

The TRRE program was born out of a desire to broaden pathways into the teaching profession within Tulare County, a rural region in California’s Central Valley. Prior to the residency program, TCOE was already deeply invested in recruiting and preparing educators for California schools. TCOE serves as the lead agency for the California Center on Teaching Careers (CCTC), a state initiative “tasked with recruiting and retaining teachers for California.”<sup>24</sup> Since 2017, the county office has worked in this capacity with “school districts, county offices of education, and colleges/universities to combat the impacts of the teacher shortage by advocating for the profession, increasing the candidate pool for all teacher preparation programs, and recruiting credentialed teachers for California’s school districts.”<sup>25</sup> Among its multiple responsibilities, CCTC helps local education agencies (LEAs) and teacher preparation programs connect with prospective teacher candidates by running digital marketing campaigns and hosting virtual and regional job fairs. Prior to the residency launch, the county office had been operating an internship program with close to 250 teachers each year for schools within Tulare, Kings, and Fresno counties.

In his capacity as Executive Director of CCTC, Marvin Lopez has worked with and supported teacher residencies across the state for more than 6 years, which helped him envision how a residency program could expand existing pathways into teaching in the Tulare region. The residency model was adopted with the goal of creating a program that could prepare teachers who would, as Lopez put it, “plan to stay in the profession much longer” and who have credentials that align with district shortage areas, namely Single Subject credentials in science, math, and English. When TCOE won a \$6.7 million Teacher Quality Partnership grant in 2019, Lopez was ready to put his insights into practice and partnered with California State University, Bakersfield as the credentialing arm of the residency. The program aims, according to Lopez, “to prepare and retain highly effective, culturally competent, ethical educators [who] reflect our student population and meet the needs of our districts. We want to make sure that we have a significant impact on our ... rural communities.”

TRRE launched during the 2020–21 academic year, but it faced significant complications due to the COVID-19 pandemic. First, the program experienced challenges with recruitment. While the initial plan had been to serve 25 residents per year, the first cohort had only 6 residents. As a result, the program was forced to scale back its partnership ambitions. The initial plan was to work with five partner districts,

but the program ended up starting with a single district partner, Visalia Unified School District. At the time of our study, the program had largely recovered from these initial setbacks and continued to grow, year by year. In the 2022–23 school year, TRRE enrolled 15 residents, up from 13 the year before, and collaborated with three districts for clinical placements (Cutler–Orosi Joint Unified School District, Tulare Joint Union High School District, and Visalia Unified School District). The program added three more district collaborators in the 2023–24 school year (Delano Joint Union High School District, Hanford Joint Union High School District, and Wonderful College Prep Academy–Delano site) and served 24 residents, close to the program goal of 25 residents per year.

## Program Design

During the 2022–23 academic year, the TRRE residency prepared residents to earn a California Preliminary Teaching Single Subject credential in math, science, or English and provided the option for residents to complete an additional semester of coursework to receive a Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction. As part of core coursework, the program also offered a computer science certificate that trained participants to integrate computer science competencies into their general subject teaching.

The core residency program took place in the fall and spring semesters of a single academic year; however, residents were required to take an additional semester of foundational coursework prior to the residency year. Unlike other CSUB residencies, TRRE residents completed foundational coursework *after* being admitted to the residency, typically during the spring semester preceding their yearlong clinical placement. (See [Teacher Residency for Rural Education Foundational Coursework](#).)

Following the residency year, residents pursuing the master’s degree completed an additional semester of coursework during the summer term. The majority of courses were taught in person at TCOE; however, the additional coursework for the master’s degree was offered virtually. (See [Table 9](#) for course requirements.)

### Teacher Residency for Rural Education Foundational Coursework

Uniquely among California State University, Bakersfield (CSUB), residencies, Teacher Residency for Rural Education (TRRE) residents took the foundational coursework that was required of all teacher credentialing candidates together as a cohort. For other residency programs, candidates were required to have completed their foundational courses in order to be eligible to apply for the residency program. In TRRE’s case, the program did not establish foundational courses as a prerequisite. Instead, residents took the foundational courses *after* they had been admitted to the program. As in the case of core coursework, CSUB created TRRE-specific sections of each foundational course, which allowed residents to take these courses at a Tulare County Office of Education (TCOE) administrative building. To make such courses possible, TCOE bought out the faculty time using funds from the Teacher Quality Partnership grant that it had received. TCOE also put funds toward tuition support for residents’ foundational courses. While foundations courses typically cost more than \$4,700 for students to complete, TCOE reduced the price to \$1,000 and covered the remainder. The decision to include the foundations course as part of the program lowered two particular barriers that candidates might otherwise face in joining the program: the commute to CSUB’s main campus (which could be quite long for the rurally located residents that TRRE aims to serve) and the cost of prerequisite coursework.

As a result of this structure, then-Residency Coordinator Adriana Cervantes-González managed two cohorts of TRRE residents in the spring semester: a new cohort of residents who were taking their foundational courses and another cohort of residents who were completing their second semester of core coursework and clinical placement. While managing the overlapping cohorts that resulted from this staggered start was, according to Cervantes-González, “not ideal,” it nonetheless provided ample time for residents to complete prerequisite coursework and for the program to make appropriate and thoughtful mentor matches.

Source: Learning Policy Institute analysis of program documents and interviews. (2024).

Residents attended their clinical placement 3 days each week, from Monday through Wednesday, and attended courses as a cohort each Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at TCOE. In addition to doing content-based coursework, residents participated in a monthly Resident Learning Community that met either virtually or in person, also at TCOE. (See [Clinical Experience](#).) Residents had Fridays off but had the option to work as substitute teachers in their host district to earn extra income.

Providing support for English learners was central to TRRE’s curricular approach and was informed by the residency’s goal of preparing residents to support a predominantly multilingual student population. Residents described a “huge focus” on English learners that was “embedded in every course we take. ... Whether we’re talking about how to use sentence frames or how to focus on ELs [English learners] or how to do SDAIE [Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English] strategies, there seems to always be that context brought in.” The emphasis in coursework on supports for multilingual learners was mirrored in other elements of the program, notably the programwide lesson plan template that prompted residents to foreground both California Content Standards *and* English Language Development Standards in their planning and to think through how they could differentiate instruction for emergent bilingual students according to different levels of proficiency in English (e.g., Advanced/Extension vs. Below Basic/Remediation).

Coursework also emphasized the pedagogical and interpersonal importance of teachers knowing and understanding the communities they serve. Although many residents had roots in the Tulare region, the program did not assume residents’ familiarity with the cultures and histories of local groups. Courses intentionally structured asset-based discussions of area communities to develop residents’ understandings of their future students’ unique backgrounds and, at the same time, to combat deficit-based narratives that residents may have internalized during their own schooling experiences. In one instance, residents went, as a class, to a local museum exhibition on the history of immigration in Tulare County. One resident recalled his professor’s emphasis that “these are the families that you are teaching. This is who your community is. And it’s important for you to get to know that community because if you don’t feel connected to it, or if you are closed off from it, then you’re already losing half the battle in the classroom.” Another resident linked the program’s community focus with other course emphases, including that residents need to understand students’ unique cultural and linguistic funds of knowledge and approach instruction using universal design for learning. The resident shared the insight that “it’s all

Coursework emphasized the pedagogical and interpersonal importance of teachers knowing and understanding the communities they serve.

about acquiring that background knowledge on our students and using that to accelerate their learning, not only so that we can assist them more but also so they feel more motivated to learn because it's something that's relatable to them."

Across courses, instructors intentionally modeled teaching strategies that residents could immediately apply in their placement classrooms. For example, one resident recalled that "at the beginning of the semester, we did a gallery walk with our professor, and [then] she coached us on how to do it ourselves. So we were able to take that into our own classrooms and implement gallery walks with our students." Another resident described intentional scaffolding of pedagogical skills: "What's very helpful for me is we learn those components and strategies, and we apply them through a project, then we actually go into the classroom and try them to see how they play out."

Furthermore, instructors intentionally aligned coursework and course assignments with district practices. Phannaphob shared that when planning instruction, she asks herself, "What are the school districts doing? And can we align what we do at the university to what the school districts are doing?" Through conversations with district program coordinators and mentor teachers, Phannaphob identified the key theories, frameworks, and methods used within partner districts so that she could incorporate them into her instruction. Her goal was to ensure that when residents encounter these concepts in the districts, "it's not the first time [they've] heard of them."

**Table 9. TRRE Course Requirements**

Fall term
<b>EDSE 5100—Classroom Management and Differentiated Instruction</b>
Classroom Management and Differentiated Instruction prepares residents “to create a supportive and optimal learning environment for all students” through the adoption of classroom management techniques, with a particular focus on the personal and environmental factors impacting students that might contribute to classroom management issues.
<b>EDSE 5200—Strategies and Methods of Teaching for the Single Subject Classroom</b>
In Strategies and Methods of Teaching, residents learn about current pedagogical research and methods specific to middle and high school classroom teaching across subject areas. They incorporate this information into lesson and unit plans that include strategies that support special populations (namely English learners) and students with special needs, and that are informed by “aspects of technology, assessment, and behavior management.”
<b>EDSE 5500—Assessment for Single Subject Teachers</b>
Assessment for Single Subject Teachers introduces residents to the use of assessment methods to guide and evaluate instruction within their subject areas. The course facilitates reflection on different assessment practices and rationales and how assessment can be used to support more equitable learning outcomes.

<b>EDTE 4350—TPA Cycle 1</b>
TPA Cycle 1 provides support and assistance for residents as they prepare for the submission of their first Teaching Performance Assessment Cycle. The course's instructor coaches and paces the completion of key assessment tasks and provides opportunities for group review and peer editing prior to submission.
<b>EDSE 5800—Single Subject Clinical Practice</b>
For Single Subject Clinical Practice, residents coteach for 3 days per week at their clinical placement site, supervised by a cooperating teacher and clinical coach.
<b>Spring term</b>
<b>EDSE 5400—Education Psychology</b>
Education Psychology focuses on theories of learning, motivation, and adolescent development and explores the “multiple factors that contribute to the complexity of teaching and learning in diverse learning communities.”
<b>EDSE 5300—Literacy Across the Curriculum</b>
Literacy Across the Curriculum is designed to introduce residents to “research-based information on adolescent literacy across content areas,” with a focus on implementing “strategies and methods for guiding and developing content-based reading and writing ability.” In this course, residents are expected to learn how to assess literacy development and to differentiate instruction in the content area to “meet the needs of the full range of learners in the classroom.”
<b>EDTE 4360—TPA Cycle 2</b>
TPA Cycle 2 provides support and assistance for residents as they prepare for the submission of their second Teaching Performance Assessment Cycle. The course's instructor coaches and paces the completion of key assessment tasks and provides opportunities for group review and peer editing prior to submission.
<b>EDSE 5810—Single Subject Final Clinical Practice</b>
For Single Subject Final Clinical Practice, residents coteach for 3 days per week at their clinical placement site, supervised by a cooperating teacher and clinical coach.

Summer term (optional master's coursework)
<b>EDCI 6100—Research Methods for Educational Leaders</b>
In Research Methods for Educational Leaders, candidates “explore their collaborative roles as researchers in various school settings.” They are encouraged to adopt an inquiry practice to ground decision-making about effective instructional strategies and treatments and to learn to formulate research questions, identify appropriate research methods, and design and reflectively implement action plans.
<b>EDCI 6200—Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice</b>
Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice provides an “advanced exploration of the various critical issues pertaining to social justice and diversity in the American education system.” Candidates develop the knowledge and skills necessary for implementing culturally relevant curriculum and pedagogy and learn the leadership skills that can be used to challenge social inequities in their schools and communities.
<b>EDCI 6300—Educational Leadership</b>
Educational Leadership introduces residents to educational leadership paradigms with a focus on teachers’ roles “as professionals and leaders in schools.” The course also supports the development of leadership knowledge and skills through residents’ supervision, coaching, mentorship, networking, and collaboration with other members of their school community.
<b>EDCI 6400—Curriculum Development and Transformation</b>
Curriculum Development and Transformation introduces students to research and theories of curriculum revision and principles of development and design. The course emphasizes data-driven approaches to curricular transformation and “the interdependence of assessment, data, and curriculum planning on student achievement.”
<b>One Elective Course</b>
Candidates select one of the following courses: Advanced Topics in Education; Creating a Culture of Literacy in Diverse Settings; Writing Strategies, Assessment, and Intervention; Literacy Instruction and Assessment; Comprehension Strategies, Assessment, and Intervention.

Sources: California State University, Bakersfield. [Online M.A. in Education—Curriculum and Instruction](#). (accessed 06/15/2024); California State University, Bakersfield. (n.d.). [Multiple subject and single subject program matrix and syllabi](#). pp. 138, 213, 240, 257.

## TRRE Course Highlights

TRRE residents were required to have an undergraduate degree that was closely related to the subject area in which they were pursuing their Single Subject credential, which allowed TRRE coursework to focus on developing residents' pedagogical content knowledge. Accordingly, methods and assessment courses were not differentiated by the specific credential subject area (e.g., math, science, English) but instead were designed to meet the generalized learning needs of candidates across Single Subject credentialing pathways by including a range of different pedagogical approaches. In this section, we highlight examples of two courses that illustrate the close ties between coursework and instructional practice.

In *Strategies and Methods of Teaching for the Single Subject Classroom*, residents learned about current pedagogical research and methods specific to middle and high school classroom teaching across subject areas. Assignments in this course immediately put theory into practice. Residents participated in multiple “teaching simulations” throughout the semester, in which they practiced implementing “high-leverage teaching practices” and received feedback from their peers.<sup>26</sup> The course culminated in a signature assignment in which residents designed a weeklong instructional unit for their respective subject areas. Components of the signature assignment (i.e., unit plan, unit calendar, daily lesson plans) were due at different points in the semester, and, in the final submission, the resident analyzed and reflected on the ways in which they aligned instruction to subject matter standards, planned to address the needs of all learners, implemented engaging instructional strategies, and incorporated technology.

In *Literacy Across the Curriculum*, residents learned about adolescent literacy development and how it occurs across content areas. Because many of the residents were Single Subject credential candidates—many of them in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields—this emphasis on literacy development and pedagogy encouraged them to adopt instructional methods that would support students’ “content-based reading and writing abilities.”<sup>27</sup> The course presented literacy strategies that can help “students of varied reading levels and language backgrounds” access subject area content, an emphasis that reinforces the program’s focus on preparing teachers to meet the needs of multilingual learners. One resident noted that incorporating the literacy strategies he learned in this course into his instructional practice “helped a lot with classroom management.” He observed that, in his clinical placement, “a lot of students struggle when it comes to reading.” By building literacy development into his science instruction, he realized he could better help them access disciplinary content and “fill that [literacy] gap” that stands between his students and their learning.

## Clinical Experience

During the fall and spring semesters, residents attended their clinical placement for 3 full days each week, from Monday through Wednesday, and remained in the same mentor teacher’s classroom for the entirety of the residency year. While the 3-day classroom schedule could make planning and lesson design challenging, Lopez felt strongly that it was important for residents to have the option to take time off to avoid experiencing burnout before they even entered the profession. Nonetheless, as part of their clinical experience, residents experienced the many ways in which the responsibilities of teaching extend beyond classroom instruction. The program encouraged residents to attend school-based professional learning communities (PLCs) and other professional learning opportunities when possible, and program leaders set the expectation that site principals and mentor teachers should extend invitations to these events.

Resident placements were made by an LEA's TRRE coordinator, in collaboration with TCOE and CSUB leads, and they took into account a resident's credential subject area, expressed preference for middle or high school, personality (assessed on a personality test), and potential commute time. Despite the geographically broad rural region that TRRE serves, program leaders aimed to cluster residents in groups of four or five at a single school site. "We don't really like to see a resident stranded alone in a school district," said Cervantes-González. Although many residents attended high school in the region, the program preferred not to place them at their alma maters—despite residents' often-expressed preference to return—so that they could experience different schools. Although the program attempted to minimize commute times, the rural locations of placement sites made long commutes (between 30 and 45 minutes) relatively common.

Residents valued the opportunity to observe and learn from their mentor teachers' classroom practices. Several noted the importance of observing how the often "idealized" picture of hypothetical classroom life actually plays out in the "realities of the classrooms that we're teaching in." For instance, one resident communicated their developing understanding that behavior management is more than "just relationships" or that "if you just give enough love to a kid, you're going to have no problems." In addition to building trusting relationships and having a positive rapport with their mentors, residents learned from observing their mentors over the course of the year that the foundations of behavior management often came down to having consistent routines, procedures, and expectations. Residents could then share these experiences in courses to reinforce, supplement, and expand on course concepts.

Mentors also modeled how to adapt plans and respond to unexpected classroom events, and they helped residents think through how to do the same. One resident described frequent conversations with his mentor at the end of the class period to reflect on events: "She'll be like, 'This [thing] occurred in the classroom today. What are you going to do if that happens again in the next period?' And she'll give me examples of what I could have done." This resident said they used the examples and strategies their mentor provided to navigate situations immediately, noting that a conversation they had during first period might inform his response to a situation in a later period: "I use those tools from the first few periods, and I'm able to remember them the very last period. It helps out."

Residents took on progressive responsibility in the classroom, guided by the program's phase-in schedule, and moved from coplanning lessons to planning the majority of instruction independently. As mentioned earlier, residents used a template during lesson planning that reinforced the program's pedagogical emphases, particularly the emphasis on supporting multilingual learners. In addition to requiring the resident to identify the California Content Standard that their lesson addressed, the template prompted residents to identify a focal California English Language Development (ELD) Standard. It further encouraged residents to reflect on their approach to academic language development; include Universal Design for Learning strategies; and think through differentiation for English learners, exceptional students, and students with social and emotional needs. For each of these categories, residents were reminded to

Residents took on progressive responsibility in the classroom, guided by the program's phase-in schedule, and moved from coplanning lessons to planning the majority of instruction independently.

adopt an asset-based approach and to connect differentiation to the lesson's Content Standard and ELD objective. Mentors typically reviewed lesson plans and provided suggestions and feedback, supported residents through the lesson's implementation, and reflected with residents on how the lesson went.

The opportunity to substitute teach on Fridays provided residents with additional opportunities to hone their practices, though without the supervision of their mentor teacher. For many residents, substitute teaching was a valuable learning experience. One resident said, "When you substitute teach, it really makes you realize what it's like to be alone [teaching in a classroom], and it's jarring. The subbing aspect is really cool because it lets you figure out really quickly, like, how much you have on your own in terms of classroom management skills." Residents noted with appreciation that program leaders emphasized that substitute teaching was optional and that coursework and credentialing work should take precedence. One resident shared:

They told us right off the bat, like, "Don't feel like you have to sub every week if you're overwhelmed, if you're struggling with TPAs [Teaching Performance Assessments], if you have classwork you need to do. [If that's the case,] take Fridays off, don't sub." So there's always been a lot of support for our own choices if we want to sub or not sub on Fridays.

Residents participated in a Resident Learning Community (RLC), which met on a monthly basis either virtually or in person at TCOE. Unlike the courses, the RLC took place during the school day, and residents took time away from their clinical placement to attend. Cervantes-González described the RLC as "open-forum time" for residents to collaboratively reflect on their clinical experiences in a "healthy dialogue that is also solutions-oriented." The RLC also provided a space outside of coursework for the residency coordinator to discuss program-related logistical matters with residents.

### ***Feedback on and Assessment of Clinical Practice***

The university's clinical coach observed candidate 6 times per semester—3 times in person and 3 times on Zoom. In-person observations typically began with a check-in between the mentor teacher and the clinical coach to share informal updates about a resident's progress.

The fact that residents' clinical coaches also served as instructors for their coursework meant they had greater insight into, according to one resident, "where our strengths are, where we need support, and they're able to use that to give us advice and strategies." Phannaphob, who also taught methods and assessment courses, held residents accountable in their clinical placements for using techniques she taught them in their coursework: "When I observe you, I want to see it. I want to see it in action." Residents experienced their coach's feedback as candid and constructive. "Anything that isn't going well, she'll give you the tools to work with it and make it into something positive," one resident said. Another resident shared an experience with troubleshooting classroom engagement over a series of multiple conversations:

I was asking the students some question while I was in front of the class, and for like 30 seconds it was dead quiet. And [my coach] was like, "Well, when that happens, tell them to Think, Pair, Share." She was like, "Give them a minute to talk to each other and then usually they'll be more confident to give an answer." So I did that, and they were dead quiet again. [laughs] So she was like, "Try this: Walk around until you hear a good answer. Then tell that group, 'I'm going to call on you because I like your answer,' so that they're prepared to share with the class." And that was an excellent strategy to get the quiet kids involved in the class.

Residents also received frequent, informal feedback from their mentor teacher on their developing classroom practices. On a monthly or less frequent basis, mentors scheduled formal observations of residents' classroom practices, during which they focused on specific components of the Danielson Framework identified for the observation period. The mentor teacher debriefed and discussed observation findings with the resident and also provided official feedback to the program using a Mentor Observation Google Form. On the form, the mentor identified the observation's focus Danielson Clusters; assessed the resident's practice as unsatisfactory, basic, proficient, or distinguished (in accordance with the program rubric); and included evidence or comments supporting their assessment. For each Cluster, the form prompted the mentor to identify a goal or focus areas they would use to "help the resident continue to improve" on the identified Cluster. The program leaders analyzed the data and used it to inform the professional learning they offered to mentors.

### ***Mentor Selection and Development***

"Without good mentors, you're not going to have a good program," said Lopez. TRRE invested significant time and financial resources to secure and develop mentor teaching talent. In 2022–23, mentors received yearly stipends of between \$1,500 and \$2,500, depending on their district. For the 2023–24 academic year, district stipends were supplemented by an additional \$2,000 from the Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) grant, bringing the total stipend to between \$3,500 and \$4,500.

Representatives from TCOE, CSUB, and the partner LEAs collaboratively interviewed prospective mentor teachers and, once members of the incoming resident cohort had been identified, contributed to decisions about resident matching. Residents received their mentor match approximately a week before the beginning of the school year and began the school year as a coteacher in the mentor's classroom. Later in the year, if the match turns out not to be a good fit, the residency partners looked for another qualified teacher at the same site who might host the resident. If there were no other options, the resident could be moved to a different school site.

The program provided structures that supported mentors' and residents' coplanning. Mentors and residents coplanned during Collaborative Planning sessions, which were guided by a Collaborative Planning Log template provided by the program. The template encouraged the resident and mentor to reflect on "what's working" and to identify an area of "current focus/challenges/concerns." It also included scaffolding for mentors' active listening and delivery of constructive feedback by including sentence starters that mentors could use to paraphrase residents' statements, ask for further clarification, prompt resident reflection, create teachable moments, and deliver suggestions. For instance, to help mentors mediate a challenge identified by the resident, the template suggested sentence starters that include framings such as "What's another way ...," "What do you think would happen if ...," and "When have you done something like ... before." The resident and mentor teacher ended the meeting by identifying next steps, scheduling the next meeting, and determining that meeting's focus area.

Mentors also participated in ongoing professional learning via monthly "mentor summits," which were hosted by Cervantes-González and district TRRE coordinators. Mentor summits took place during the school day, and residents independently led instruction in the classrooms while mentors attended the summits. Scheduling summits during the school day was important because it helped mentorship responsibilities remain within standard working hours, which increased the attractiveness of mentoring,

and having the resident step in as a lead teacher allowed mentors to attend professional learning opportunities without having to look for or plan extensively for a substitute. Due to their role in classroom planning, the resident could continue to drive instruction in the mentor's absence.

Part of the focus of the mentor summits was to ensure that mentor teachers understood programmatic elements, such as the pace at which residents were expected to progressively take on responsibility in the classroom, the information that residents were learning in their coursework, or how mentors could support residents through licensure requirements such as the TPA.

Summit meetings also provided opportunities for ongoing professional learning to support mentors' coaching practices. "We definitely need to invest in our mentors," said Shannon Moore, former TRRE Program Coordinator for Visalia Unified School District (VUSD), who co-led these professional learning opportunities. Building a mentor teacher's capacity, according to Moore, honors the "huge role and responsibility" that they take on by bringing a resident into their classroom, while also helping the mentor teacher to, in turn, build that resident's capacity. Program leaders drew on the data that mentor teachers regularly submitted (e.g., assessments of residents' classroom progress) to inform the selection of coaching topics and deliver support that was tailored to mentors' specific contexts. In addition to using program data, LEA partners incorporated other coaching priority areas into professional development. For example, VUSD Director of Recruitment and Hiring Serena Arias, who also contributed to mentor summits, highlighted the additional need to train mentors in "how to support teachers of color in rural areas." Given the cultural mismatch between a predominantly White mentor teacher population and the highly diverse TRRE residency cohorts, Arias viewed professional development along these lines as key to accomplishing the residency's goal of diversifying the teacher workforce.

The mentor summit was also responsive to the professional learning needs communicated by mentor teachers. "We really learned that mentors want to do well by their residents. They want to support and coach them, and they're looking to develop that skill set," said Cervantes-González. In response to mentor teacher feedback, the program began to bring in additional training around cognitive coaching to provide mentors with scaffolding for "crucial conversations"—conversations that are high stakes and characterized by opposing opinions and strong emotions<sup>28</sup>—with their residents. Mentor teachers described as particularly helpful the summit meetings in which they had opportunities to role-play coaching so they could practice handling difficult scenarios. Additionally, there were plans to incorporate discussions of mental health in the professional context of teaching, both for mentor teachers' own benefit and to support their modeling of career-sustaining practices for their residents.

Mentor teachers appreciated the opportunity to learn, particularly alongside fellow mentors. One mentor noted that summits provide important assistance in navigating what was, for her and many other mentors, the new experience of coaching. "As new mentors, going in with a bit of anxiety," she said, "you're thinking, 'Am I providing enough support, too much support?' You know, 'Am I doing this right?'" Connecting with other mentors at the summits allowed this mentor to share experiences, feel supported, and ultimately develop confidence in her coaching practice. Mentors also expressed appreciation for the program's emphasis on their continued professional learning, reporting that they felt "so much more trained, so much more supported" than when they had mentored candidates from traditional teacher preparation programs. "This is so, so much better," said one mentor.

## Recruitment and Admissions

TRRE's ideal resident has a deep understanding of the communities served by partner districts. By conducting targeted outreach, the program aimed to recruit candidates who represent the student population's demographics and, according to Cervantes-González, "can relate not just culturally, but [to] the other emotional and psychological issues" unique to the program's rural context. The program's emphasis on localized recruitment emerged from this desire: "The minute you begin to recruit people from your own communities, you're definitely going to have representation of your students," said Lopez.

As a Single Subject credentialing program, TRRE required applicants to have an undergraduate degree (or higher) that was related to the subject area in which they intend to pursue their credential. This requirement represented a constraint on recruitment. Lopez noted that, given high district need for STEM teachers, many math and science majors interested in teaching who might otherwise be good fits for the program tend to be recruited before they have a credential. However, this requirement also allowed for what Lopez called a "very focused, concentrated program" that prepares teachers with deep subject matter expertise that aligns with district needs.

The program relied heavily on web-based and social media marketing, which Lopez had extensive experience with through his work at CCTC. He reported that the job platform Indeed generated the most traffic but that marketing efforts needed to have a wide reach to bring in a good number of candidates. He said, "To give you an idea of what we've seen in terms of traffic, for every 40 hits that we get, two people come and talk to us [about the program]. And of those two, one moves on to the [application phase]."

In addition to online marketing, the program established a presence in the community by tabling at large local events (e.g., Tulare's World Ag Expo) and posting flyers on bulletin boards at local businesses (e.g., Starbucks, Target). In addition to local marketing, the TRRE program also recruited students who already attend CSUB and were interested in connecting with a residency to complete their teaching credential. TCOE hosted weekly informational meetings via Zoom, during which prospective candidates could learn more about program requirements and details.

Prospective candidates went through the standard CSUB credentialing and program application process to gain program admission. Cervantes-González recognized that application requirements could be daunting and potentially discouraging for many interested candidates, particularly those from populations that have been historically excluded from the teaching profession. She emphasized the importance of asking, "How do we make sure that this nuanced process of applying, of understanding [program requirements] ... isn't what prevents [potential candidates] from taking that next step?" Motivated by this question, Cervantes-González committed significant time to supporting candidates "to and through" the application process by hosting a series of application assistance workshops that were "specifically tailored" to help them navigate the different requirements. Additionally, Cervantes-González personalized application support by checking in with program applicants individually via email or phone to ensure they had completed various milestones. She also sent out late applicant codes to students who have

either had difficulty completing application requirements before the university deadline or who have been referred to the program after that deadline has passed. Two residents confirmed the importance of application support and flexibility:

I remember getting checked up on constantly and like, you know, if I needed help, [program staff] were always there to help me. And I really appreciate that because, at times, I did feel like I got stuck on parts of the application, and so that kind of really got me through the whole process.

I applied really late, and I'm very thankful for [Cervantes-González] because she was the one that really helped me get in. And she helped me have like my own, like, private interview with, like, [Lopez]. Thankfully, I was able to get in—again, very late, but I was able to do so.

Cervantes-González clarified that supporting students through the application process and extending flexibility does not involve “lowering the bar or lowering our standards” but is instead a way of removing barriers to entry for “candidates [who] can serve our community in very meaningful ways.”

Once candidates submitted their applications, TCOE, CSUB, and the district partners all provided input on candidate selection. The program hosted virtual “advisement meetings” at which representatives from each organization conducted candidate interviews and then determined as a group whether the candidate was a good fit for the program. If the candidate was accepted, decisions about their placement were also made in partnership, after discussions about which school districts and sites had the capacity and appropriate mentor to host a particular resident. “So it’s truly a collective effort in terms of not just selecting the candidates, but also selecting and matching the mentor teachers,” said Lopez.

## Resident Supports

Residents benefited from numerous forms of support designed to facilitate their success within the program and their ultimate entry into the teaching profession.

### Financial Support

For many residents, the program’s high stipend and the opportunities for additional income were selling points. “It provided a great opportunity to get my credential [and] not have to go into debt,” said one resident. Each resident received a stipend of \$35,000 that was disbursed in increments throughout the year. In addition, TCOE provided tuition assistance for the prerequisite coursework that TRRE residents took as a cohort, which translated to \$3,751 per resident.<sup>29</sup> Residents could also apply for state and federal grants (including the Golden State Teacher Grant, federal Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant, and Cal Grant), internal scholarships, and federal student loans. (See [Table 10](#).)

In addition to the stipend and financial aid, residents had the opportunity to supplement their income by substitute teaching for their district on Fridays. The program negotiated with partner LEAs that, as part of their investment in resident development, residents would receive priority for substitute teaching and, in most partner districts, be paid at the long-term substitute rate, which was approximately \$50 per day more than the short-term substitute rate that they would otherwise receive. Lopez calculated that if a resident substitute taught every Friday during their residency year, they could make an additional \$8,000 to \$10,000.

**Table 10. TRRE Financial Supports for Residents, 2022–23**

Source	Amount across residents	Percentage of residents receiving support	Average amount of support for receiving residents
Local education agency resident stipend	\$525,000	100%	\$35,000
Golden State Teacher Grant	\$113,430	60%	\$12,603
Tulare County Office of Education tuition assistance	\$56,265	100%	\$3,751
California State University, Bakersfield scholarships	\$92,385	73%	\$8,400
Federal loans	\$85,875	47%	\$12,268

Source: Personal communication with Adriana Cervantes-González, Teacher Residency for Rural Education former Residency Coordinator. (2023, August 30).

## Cohort Support

Residents valued the social support they received from members of their residency cohort. “We’re honestly a cohort family,” enthused one resident. Residents first met one another in foundational courses, typically taken in the spring or summer preceding the residency year. By the time the residency formally began, they were already a “close, tight-knit group.” Meeting each Friday for coursework provided an ongoing touchpoint that enabled the residents to continue developing their relationships. Outside of class time, residents used a messaging application to ask each other questions, plan meetings, and share updates and reminders. They described feeling invested in fellow residents’ success. “We have each other’s backs,” said one resident. “We’re checking up on each other, making sure we’re doing what we have to do, ’cause we definitely want to see each other teaching and getting our credentials.” They frequently gathered to work on coursework, study and prepare for credentialing tests, conduct mock interviews, peer-review resumes, and celebrate credentialing milestones. Throughout the residency year, noted one resident:

We spend a lot of time getting to know each other. And over time, you build that trust, and I think that allows you to be vulnerable and come in and share some of the hardest aspects of teaching. ... It feels a lot safer to come in and say, like, “Wow, I really bombed this week. Can I talk to you about it?” ... I don’t think I would feel comfortable doing that if I was just in a class of 30 people rotating over a semester.

For the many residents who shared a placement site with other cohort members, their bond was deepened by their shared experience at their location. While residents had different subject area focuses based on the Single Subject credential they were pursuing, one resident communicated that the cohort

“pretty much evened out into thirds—English, math, and the sciences—so we all have someone to lean on.” Residents appreciated opportunities to collaborate with their subject-alike colleagues, but they also found it beneficial to share ideas across disciplinary lines.

The cohort support was particularly appreciated by one student, a first-generation college graduate, who described how his cohort helped him cope with the many program unknowns: “When I got here, I knew I wanted to be here and I knew I belonged, but I was super-overwhelmed. I didn’t know how I was going to do this. You just have no knowledge of what’s going to happen. And I feel like this cohort has been so helpful and resourceful. If I have questions, I don’t hesitate to ask anybody.”

## **Academic and Credentialing Support**

Residents saw the CSUB program faculty as their greatest advocates. Their support, even in challenging situations, was interpreted by one resident as coming “from a place of, ‘Hey, we want you guys to become teachers. We’re going to do everything we can to help you.’” This same resident, who described experiencing a “major issue with the college,” shared that his professors “really went to bat for me and essentially saved my career.”

For all incoming residents who still needed to verify subject matter competence, TCOE provided free training materials for the California Subject Examinations for Teachers (CSETs) through an online program that included study guides and practice tests. Additionally, the office offered writing services and support for interview preparation and job placement. Above and beyond these services, Lopez—the head of the program—served as a resource for residents and periodically visited residents’ classes to provide updates and answer questions.

## **Hiring and Induction Support**

Districts worked with TCOE and CSUB to facilitate seamless transitions into employment for program graduates. In VUSD, the HR department connected with residents early and often. When Moore, the former TRRE Program Coordinator for VUSD, was in that role, for example, she served as the point of contact for residents, conducted frequent check-ins, and introduced residents to other individuals on the HR team, including a credentials analyst who could answer credentialing and testing questions. At some sites, Moore provided extra training about educational technology tools for residents and shared lesson plans, activities, and strategies with them as well. Moore also led induction for all new teacher candidates in the district and, in this capacity, continued to support residents after graduation by matching them with an induction mentor and helping them meet the requirements of the induction process as dictated by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing program standards.

This sustained relationship benefited residency graduates. Moore felt an elevated sense of responsibility for program graduates, having been their “point of contact from the very beginning,” and she conducted personalized check-ins “just to ensure that they have everything they need” during the induction process. In cases where residents did not match with an open position in their placement district, TCOE stepped in to connect the resident with HR departments in other partner districts. As TRRE’s most long-term partner, VUSD has had time to develop systems to streamline resident hiring. As the program adds new partners, VUSD can serve as a model of district support and engagement.

Residents spoke to the importance of the suite of supports provided by CSUB, TCOE, and collaborating districts as they worked their way through the residency, credentialing, and hiring processes. One resident noted that without the support provided by each residency partner, “I would probably never have become a teacher. It’s just so challenging to go through the [credentialing] process.” This resident, a former English learner, linked these challenges to the lack of diverse racial and ethnic representation in the teaching workforce: “You hear all the time, ‘Why isn’t there representation?’ Well, the processes are so challenging that people might know their material, they might know their concepts, but it’s just so difficult.” For this resident, the TRRE program provided important scaffolding that helped him move through the complicated credentialing process to ultimately accomplish his goal of becoming a teacher.

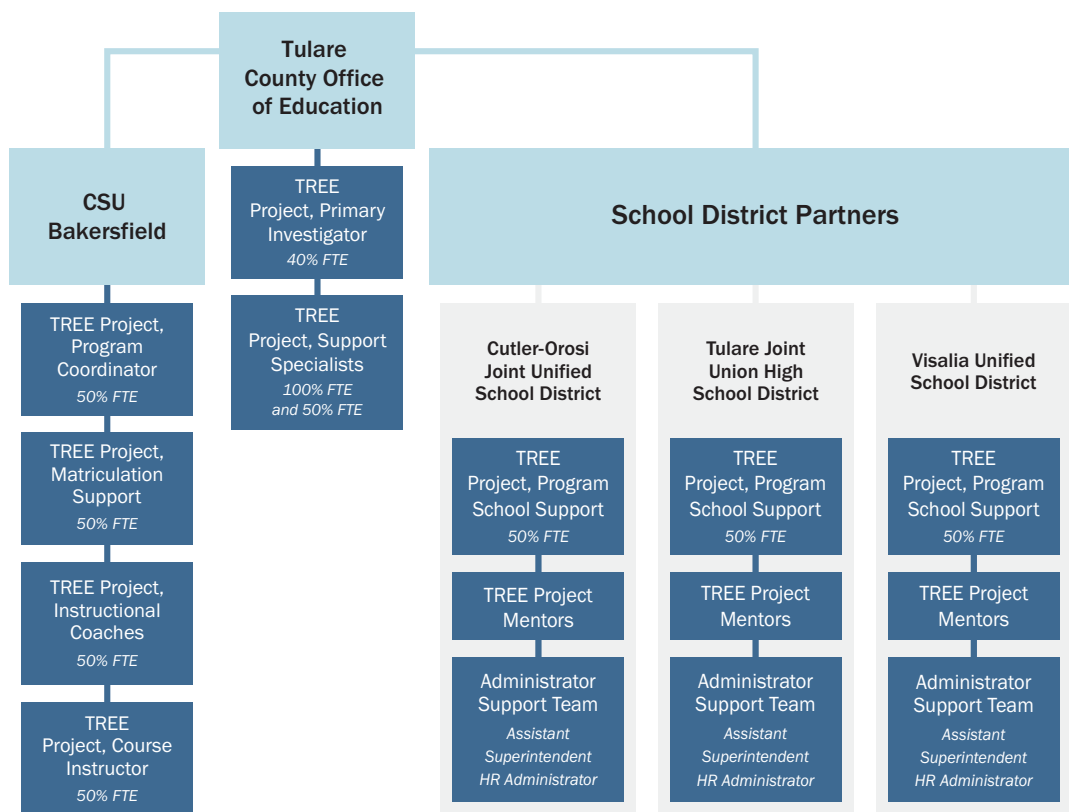
## Partnership

The program benefited from a strong partnership between TCOE and CSUB, which served, respectively, as the fiscal and credentialing arms of the program. (See [Figure 5](#).) On the TCOE side, Lopez and two administrative staff (one part time and another full time) supported program administration. On the CSUB side, Cervantes-González served as TRRE Residency Coordinator, taught coursework, and provided clinical coaching for a subset of residents during the 2022–23 academic year. The program received additional support from another CSUB faculty member, Phannaphob, who taught TRRE coursework and served as a clinical coach for residents, and from a CSUB credentialing specialist who helped with admissions and matriculation.

Program governance was informal, and decision-making was a collaborative effort. Lopez and Cervantes-González met weekly, and sometimes more frequently, to address programmatic needs. While CSUB led curriculum development, university staff collaborated with TCOE and LEA staff to identify and integrate important topics that might receive less focus in traditional teacher preparation, such as mental health and school safety. Midway through each year, partners came together to discuss curricular changes for the subsequent school year.

Involving a county office of education as a residency partner is a relatively uncommon practice that, for TRRE, had many benefits. First, TCOE took the lead on relationship-brokering between TRRE and partner districts. Tulare County is home to 44 separate districts. By virtue of Lopez’s role as Executive Director of the California Center on Teaching Careers and his long tenure in the county, he has a wide network of district administrators and is deeply familiar with district cultures, both of which contribute to the development of partnerships. When the program launched in 2019, Lopez intended to pilot the program in three districts with which TCOE had a history of collaboration. Specifically, he focused on districts that considered the residency program to be a good fit for their needs and were willing to invest \$10,000 toward each resident’s stipend, a key stipulation established by Lopez to ensure program sustainability. Due to COVID-19, the program launched with a single district partner, VUSD, but it scaled up to include three local districts in the 2022–23 academic year (see [Figure 5](#)) and added another two districts for the 2023–24 school year, for a total of five district partners. Lopez took the lead on collaboration with placement districts through standing meetings that occurred every other week. These meetings allowed Lopez to “constantly communicate and meet with [placement districts] to make sure that the program is running smoothly and that their needs are being met.”

**Figure 5. TRRE Organizational Chart, 2022–23**



Source: Teacher Residency for Rural Education. (n.d.). *Organizational chart, 2022–2023*.

Second, TCOE’s fiscal administration of the program, which was enabled by the organization’s extensive experience with federal grants management and reporting, took this load off of overburdened university and district staff, allowing them to focus on resident and mentor development. Furthermore, as a result of his grants management experience, Lopez understood that federal grants would not always be available and that planning for sustainability would be key. From the program’s inception, he has asked, “When federal and state funding sources go away, who is going to be responsible for this project? How do we sustain it? How do we maintain it?”

For Lopez, the onus rests with district partners to maintain the pathway as a long-term investment in teacher preparation, recruitment, and retention. “The approach with districts,” he noted, is to encourage them to “look at how much money [they] spend on recruitment and work in how many of those teachers stay after you spend all those hundreds of thousands of dollars.” Instead, he suggested, they can “set aside a portion of that [recruitment budget] for a resident who you know is going to stay because they’re someone from the community.” When selecting district partners, Lopez focused on districts that were willing to invest in the long-term sustainability of the residency pathway by, as noted earlier, committing \$10,000 toward each resident’s stipend.

Districts also assigned an administrator to support the residency at 30% to 50% of their full-time equivalent appointment, depending on the number of residents in the district, and the program paid the residency-focused portion of the administrator's salary. LEA-based residency coordinators typically were part of the human resources or new teacher induction departments. Referred to as the district's TRRE program coordinators, these staff members attended monthly leadership team meetings and were responsible for matching residents with mentors, allocating mentor stipends, and supporting residents and mentors throughout the year. "It's important to have somebody on-site where the residents are being hosted ... because that person is there, day in, day out," said Lopez. The TRRE coordinator served as a clear on-site point of contact for residents and mentor teachers and helped "streamline and centralize" communication between program sites and leadership.

Lopez met with representatives from partner districts on a biweekly basis. "You need to have close, open communication and collaboration with the districts that are part of your program," he reflected. In addition to collaborating with district partners for program admissions interviews and mentor matching, TRRE incorporated districts' input on program design. For example, the program adopted its practice of keeping Fridays free of coursework or clinical attendance in response to districts' expressed need for substitute teachers. Lopez also encouraged principals and mentor teachers at each placement site to build their colleagues' understanding of the residency mission at in-service staff meetings so that everyone in the school community would have a clear understanding of "why our residents are at their sites and why our residents are working with their students." (See [Partnership Management: Visalia Unified School District](#) for more information on one of TRRE's district partnerships.)

## **Partnership Management: Visalia Unified School District**

The Teacher Residency for Rural Education (TRRE) launched in 2020 with Visalia Unified School District (VUSD) as its sole placement district. Although the program developed relationships with additional districts in the intervening years, VUSD remained a close and influential collaborator. The district oversaw the residency through its Department of Human Resources Development. During the 2022–23 school year, the district's TRRE Program Coordinator at the time, Shannon Moore, was a teacher on special assignment who worked with Serena Arias, Director of Recruitment and Hiring, to manage the residency. Both Moore and Arias attended monthly leadership meetings and helped facilitate the program's mentor summit, and Moore handled the day-to-day responsibilities of residency coordination. TCOE program lead Marvin Lopez, Executive Director of the California Center on Teaching Careers, served as Moore's primary point of contact, although any resident issues were addressed in conversation with both Lopez and then-Residency Coordinator Adriana Cervantes-González. Negotiating roles, responsibilities, and communication across partners represented an ongoing challenge, which the partners continued to navigate with support from the National Center for Teaching Residencies. "We've come a long way as a partnership over the last 2 years," said Moore, although she acknowledged that there was still work to be done.

Arias and Moore have actively contributed their expertise toward mentor and resident development. Arias, in particular, aimed to support the residency's mission to diversify the teacher workforce by providing professional development to mentor teachers that incorporates adult learning theory and addresses the "cultural mismatch" between a predominantly White mentor population and the

diverse residents they support. To this end, the pair has facilitated multiple trainings designed to build mentors' capacity to support their residents. They have also hosted training for VUSD residents that focused on teacher identity, cultural proficiency and responsiveness, and the importance of diversity within the schooling system. This training has served the additional purposes of reinforcing district-valued practices for relating to the district's diverse student population and cultivating a sense of welcome and belonging for residents of color who might later be hired in the district.

In addition, Arias periodically visited residents' placement classrooms to observe their teaching practice, check on mentors, and develop relationships with residents as a representative of the district's human resources team. Moore also checked in with residents and mentors on an as-needed basis. In these check-ins, she emphasized to residents that she was "not a manager" and had no influence on their hiring, making her a "safe" confidant and advisor for residents during their clinical placement. Both Arias and Moore expressed a strong willingness to contribute to the residency's ongoing development and communicated a desire for more open data-sharing to inform their support for mentors and residents—especially data that would allow them to intervene as early as possible when issues arise in clinical placements.

The district valued the residency as a talent development strategy. "We want [residents] to ultimately be employed in our district, and we want to see them hired, if possible, at the school where they've built relationships," said Arias. "They've had that full year to develop relationships with their department, and so they can hit the ground running when they have their own classroom as teacher of record." The yearlong clinical placement allowed the district to assess residents' preparedness and to contribute to their growth as an educator.

Nonetheless, a degree of friction could enter the partnership when the district decided not to extend an employment offer to a resident, namely in cases where a resident was not on track to achieve their Preliminary Credential by the start of the next school year. District representatives shared that, in past instances, they have felt frustration at the pressure from the university to "justify a rationale" for these decisions, whereas they would prefer that the university "trust the professionalism and judgment of the [local education agency]" as an equal partner in the residency. Navigating this type of tension and others that emerge in the context of residency partnerships required "tough conversations" and open discussion between program partners in order to maintain positive working relationships.

Source: Learning Policy Institute analysis of program documents and interviews. (2024).

## Program Outcomes

Three years in, Lopez proudly asserted that district partners were "beginning to see the fruits of our labor." The first two cohorts graduated a total of 18 residents, all of whom completed their clinical placement in VUSD; 94% of these completers took positions in local rural districts. Of the five program completers from Cohort 1, 100% continued to teach in high-need schools as of the 2023–24 school year. While COVID-related challenges slowed the program's growth toward its goal of preparing 25 residents, Lopez reported that districts were enthusiastic about the quality of the preparation they observed in the graduated residents: "I keep hearing over and over from the districts [that] are hiring, saying 'We're getting

a second-year teacher when they're done with the residency program!" Program graduates, according to Moore, "are a leg ahead of the typical first-year candidates ... because they have engaged in the yearlong clinical experience." She added:

A lot of our residents are actually employed at the school site that they were doing their clinical experience at. So that's been great. They've already met the team, they're already a part of the PLC culture. ... And so they're really integrated into the culture, which helps them, I think, understand the inner workings of how our school sites function. So when they come in, it's not a shock to them that, you know, this is the way discipline works, or this is the way curriculum and PLCs function. ... That's been unique and kind of awesome.

For Cervantes-González, the most rewarding outcome was the evidence of how the program provides opportunities for graduates to "break their cycle of poverty" by connecting with a salaried and stable teaching position.

## Financial Model

In 2019, TCOE received a 5-year TQP grant of \$6.7 million to establish a residency in Tulare County. This grant contributed \$25,000 toward each resident's stipend. District partners supplemented residents' stipends with an additional \$10,000 using Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) funds, totaling to a \$35,000 stipend. District partners also provided a mentor stipend of between \$1,500 and \$2,500. During the 2023–24 school year, districts' contribution to the mentor stipend was supplemented by an additional \$2,000 from the TQP grant, bringing the total to between \$3,500 and \$4,500 for a yearlong mentorship commitment. "It's still not enough," acknowledged Lopez, "but it's better than what they were getting before." The university provided matching funds for the TQP grant through faculty staffing and administrative support. (See [Table 11](#).)

As the program entered the final year of the TQP grant, program sustainability was front of mind. TCOE secured a California Commission on Teacher Credentialing Implementation Grant in 2022, which supported the residency's ongoing development. Lopez also anticipated that further federal funding for residency programs would be available. Nonetheless, he viewed district investment as ultimately the most sustainable funding solution:

When federal and state funding goes away, who is going to be responsible for this project? How do we sustain it? And really, it's on the districts. ... Look how much money you spend on recruitment [and factor in] how many of those teachers stay after you spend those hundreds of thousands of dollars. ... [Instead,] set aside a portion of that for a resident who you know is gonna stay because they're someone from the community.

Lopez shared that he had begun conversations with the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) team at TCOE to encourage them to "talk to the districts [that] are a part of this project about putting the residency program into [their LCAPs]"—beyond their existing nominal contribution to resident stipends—"as part of their sustainability plan for the next 5 years." By normalizing district investment in and ownership of the preparation of their future workforce, the TRRE team hoped to ultimately decrease program reliance on unpredictable grant funding in favor of more stable and sustainable district funding sources.

**Table 11. TRRE Annual Revenues and Expenditures per Resident**

Revenues/ expenses	Category	California State University, Bakersfield	Tulare County Office of Education
<b>Revenues</b>	Tuition	\$8,400	
	Fundraising (e.g., federal grants, philanthropy)		\$75,000
<b>Total revenues</b>		<b>\$8,400</b>	<b>\$75,000</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	Administration and staff		\$29,800
	Academic faculty	\$8,400	
	Facilities/Operating		\$500
	Recruitment and student support staff		\$2,700
	Direct resident supports (e.g., scholarships, compelling needs, supplemental; average cost)		\$15,000
	Resident living stipends (average)		\$25,000
	Mentor teacher stipends (average)		\$2,000
<b>Total expenses</b>		<b>\$8,400</b>	<b>\$75,000</b>

Note: Average cohort size = 17.

Source: Personal communication with Marvin Lopez, Executive Director of the California Center on Teaching Careers at Tulare County Office of Education. (2024, July 19).

## Continuous Improvement

As a young residency, TRRE prioritized investment in continuous improvement. “We’re situated in a unique partnership,” said Cervantes-González, “so that comes with a lot of opportunities for all of us to learn. And we’ve definitely grown and learned, and that’s strengthened partnership as well.” Cervantes-González benefited from participating in CSUB’s Teacher Residency Consortium, where she could troubleshoot and collaborate with other residency coordinators around shared challenges and strategies.

Furthermore, the program’s TQP funding has allowed it to contract with external organizations for program evaluation and technical assistance. The program enlisted WestEd as an external program evaluator, and, during the 2022–23 academic year, the evaluation team conducted monthly meetings with role-specific groups of mentor teachers, school administrators, residents, and the program administrative team to

collect data that could inform program direction and grant reporting. The evaluators aggregated their data midyear, which allowed the TRRE leadership team to assess their findings and then implement immediate adjustments in response to the findings and feedback. The program also contracted with the National Center for Teacher Residencies (NCTR) for support. NCTR representatives met with the core leadership team to help improve existing program systems, specifically by clarifying the roles and responsibilities held by each residency partner. The organization also provided updates on the national perspective about the future of residency programs.

In addition to external support and data collection, the program engaged in internal continuous improvement with a particular focus on improving mentorship. Each month, mentors completed informal surveys about residents' clinical progress. Cervantes-González used this survey data to holistically identify areas in which residents required additional support. These areas then informed conversations with mentor teachers and were folded into future coaching professional development that they receive at monthly mentor summits. After each mentor summit, mentors filled out additional feedback forms to evaluate the quality of the professional learning they received and to communicate any needs for further support. In response to mentor feedback, for example, the program scaled back its aspiration to support mentor teachers in achieving their National Board Certification since mentor teachers reported that they were feeling overwhelmed.

To maintain the program's alignment with partner district priorities, the program created an advisory committee through which stakeholders could provide their perspectives. The committee was made up of program leadership, administrators from district partners, representatives from district partners who are not directly involved in the residency (e.g., teachers, assistant superintendents), mentor teachers, and residency graduates. The committee met twice per year to share program updates and solicit feedback and suggestions based on what committee members were seeing at their school and district sites.

## Next Steps

As TRRE emerged from its challenging, pandemic-era start-up years, program leadership looked to continue building and expanding the residency pathway. This eventually led to some changes for the program.

One major change following the completion of our study was that, as of the 2024–25 academic year, TCOE transitioned from its partnership with CSUB as the credentialing arm of the residency to instead partner with California State University, Fresno (Fresno State) and California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt (Cal Poly Humboldt). The decision was the result of growing tension between CSUB and TCOE when leadership changes and a communication gap during the 2023–24 academic year resulted in nine residents having to redo their final student teaching semester. This delayed these residents' opportunities to apply for their Preliminary Credential and enter the teaching profession. It also overburdened relationships with districts that had partially funded (\$10,000) residents' preparation with the expectation that they would be able to hire the residents in the fall, and it ultimately impacted the relationship between CSUB and TCOE to the extent that TCOE began to plan the transition to a new institution of higher education partner. This episode underscores the importance of clear and transparent communication between partners, particularly when decisions have a direct impact on residents' program completion and financial implications for participants and partnering agencies.

Fortunately, TCOE's leadership enabled the program to sustain itself through this conflict and provide additional support for candidates in limbo, and leadership expressed enthusiasm about the opportunities opened up through the partnerships with Fresno State and Cal Poly Humboldt. At the same time, the program leadership intends to continue engaging with CSUB as a residency thought partner and hopes to support future collaborations in the residency work.

Lopez expressed ambitions for expansion both in terms of credentialing options and district partnerships. The goal, on the credentialing side, is to continue adding new credentialing options to the program's present focus on Single Subject credential preparation. In the 2024–25 academic year, the residency launched a special education pathway and intended to add the option for residents to pursue a credential in bilingual education in future years. In terms of partnership, Lopez aimed to continue developing new partnerships with districts in Tulare County, with the ultimate, long-term goal of having residents in each of the county's districts. Nonetheless, for the county, the residency is one of multiple talent development strategies. Lopez acknowledged that “there isn't a single pathway that's the right one for everyone, so our vision, our goal” at TCOE is “always to have multiple pathways.”

As TRRE continues to develop new relationships with district partners, including the additions during the 2023–24 academic year, it continues the work of navigating the division of roles and responsibilities between the institution of higher education, TCOE, and district partners. TRRE's original district partner, VUSD, expressed high levels of interest in contributing to the development of teachers for the district, both in terms of its financial investment in resident stipends and in its desire to contribute to the professional development of mentor teachers and residents. “As a district employee,” said Moore, “I think that I bring an insight that could really enhance the residents' experience.” VUSD staff were committed to ensuring “that the resident feels like they belong, that they feel equipped, and ultimately that the mentor has enough capacity to be the best coach that the residents deserve.” This level of commitment is an incredible resource to the program. As TRRE expands its network of district partners, these partners' levels of commitment may vary, and the program will face the challenge of creating systems to collaborate effectively with numerous partners while incorporating district-specific desires for engagement in programming and professional learning.

The program will also continue to navigate relationships with existing partners and work to establish systems that meet district needs. Despite the active role of LEA partners in residency guidance, frictions nonetheless exist. The most notable friction identified by both the residency coordinator and LEA representatives related to the sharing of resident data between partners. The program collected frequent data on resident performance from mentor teachers and clinical coaches, but partners disagree about whether these data should be shared with LEA HR staff. Cervantes-González expressed a desire to maintain residents' confidentiality and to protect the residency period as a learning experience. She worried that sharing residents' evaluation data might impact their chances of being hired. In contrast, VUSD staff expressed concern that the university's withholding of relevant information from evaluations inhibits the district's ability to step in to support residents and mentor teachers. Moore, the former VUSD TRRE Program Coordinator, wanted evaluation data to be passed along so that she could monitor and proactively address resident issues. While the university rightfully wants to protect residents' right to learn and make mistakes during the residency year, Moore shared that VUSD wanted advanced notice of any resident issues so that they could help support their potential future hires. “At the end of the day, these [residents] are going to be, potentially, our future teachers, and the students [in our district] deserve the best,” said Moore.

## Conclusion

The multiple residencies at California State University, Bakersfield (CSUB) provide accelerated and compensated pathways into the teaching profession that meet the needs of teacher candidates who are interested in teaching in different locations, grade ranges, and subject areas. The pathways operate intensive programs that maintain high standards for developing residents' pedagogical skills and knowledge. While the studied programs share numerous similarities that are worth noting, particularly since they align with the research on the features of successful residencies, they also feature programmatic differences that emerged from the adaptation of the residency model to each program's unique partnership context.

### Cross-Cutting Practices

Both Kern Urban Teacher Residency (Kern Urban) and Teacher Residency for Rural Education (TRRE) carefully aligned coursework with residents' clinical practice and incorporated the unique contexts of the districts where residents were placed and likely to teach. As a result, residents had many opportunities to reinforce, extend, and reflect on their learning, both in their assignments and in resident learning communities. Furthermore, by building preparation for licensure exams into coursework, programs prepared residents to achieve their Preliminary Credentials by the end of the residency year, with the goal that they would enter their first lead teaching role as a certified teacher.

Both residencies emphasized the importance of the mentor teacher in determining the quality of a resident's experience. With this in mind, program and district representatives worked together to identify and select mentor teachers whose classroom practices aligned with residency values. Programs compensated mentor teachers for their time and provided ongoing professional learning to build their coaching capacity. Program and district staff collaborated on mentor professional development, often building in content that was responsive to the expressed needs of current and former mentor teachers and residents. The programs' adoption of the Danielson Framework to guide clinical evaluation and feedback helped establish consistency between the feedback that residents receive from their mentor teachers and from their clinical coaches.

Residents received comprehensive support from program staff throughout the residency year. Program coordinators shepherded residents through the program by regularly checking in on their well-being, reminding them of credentialing deadlines, and extending support and sharing advice as needed. The residents' clinical coaches and other program faculty also made themselves available to residents who needed advising or support. As residents approached the end of their residency year, program-affiliated human resources staff from partner districts helped connect residents with district openings and, after they were hired, facilitated their transition into induction programs. Working together, program and local education agency (LEA) partners aimed to create as seamless a pathway as possible into employment.

The LEAs with which these programs partnered valued the residency as a talent pipeline. In both Kern Urban and TRRE, districts communicated this valuation through an ongoing investment of Local Control and Accountability Plan funds in program operations. Residency partnerships benefited from clearly established roles and responsibilities and were strengthened by frequent communication and collaboration around program development and management. Year over year, partners worked together

to continuously improve program design and outcomes, informed by comprehensive data collection and analysis. As a result, these pathways continued to prepare highly competent and racially diverse new teachers who took positions in partner districts, almost exclusively in high-need subject areas and schools, and tended to be retained in these positions at high rates.

## Variations That Accommodate Partner Needs

Despite the residencies' many shared practices, key points of variation emerged, largely in response to the different contexts in which each program operated. As noted, Kern Urban featured a single-district partnership with a large, urban, TK–8 district, whereas TRRE partnered with a county office of education to facilitate placements in multiple rural districts. The programs have adopted different strategies to address the needs of their unique partners.

Much variation emerged from differences in partner districts' staffing needs. Districts' predicted staffing needs informed both programs' selection of the credentialing pathways they offered. Given that Kern Urban worked with a TK–8 district, the residency's primary focus on Multiple Subject credentialing and its practice of placing residents in both an elementary and a middle school classroom for their clinical placements resulted in a versatile pool of residency-prepared teachers who could slot in wherever the district had a need.

In contrast, Tulare County districts had a high need for effective upper-grade science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) teachers, which prompted TRRE's focus on math and science Single Subject credentialing. By requiring residents to already have an undergraduate degree in a field related to their credential area, the program aimed to build on their strong subject area content knowledge and provide the necessary pedagogical knowledge and classroom experience that would promote their future classroom effectiveness. Furthermore, the program worked to recruit candidates from the rural communities served by their partner district so that these candidates would be more likely to stay in the region. In order to facilitate this localized talent development, the program hosted all program coursework at the Tulare County Office of Education (TCOE) administrative building, rather than at CSUB's campus, which was located approximately 70 miles away. While hosting coursework at partners' sites is a common CSUB residency practice, TRRE uniquely built the foundational courses—usually prerequisites for applying to a residency program—into the program itself by buying out faculty time so that residents could take these courses as a cohort on site at TCOE, which also helped lower barriers to access.

The programs' different approaches to substitute teaching also emerged from different partner needs. Both residencies required all residents to get an Emergency 30-Day Substitute Teaching Permit before beginning their clinical placement. This practice allowed the district, which funded 100% of resident stipends, to issue payments directly to residents, since hiring residents as a substitute teacher provided them with a district employee ID. While residents could substitute for their mentor teacher in the event of an absence, they did not enter the general substitution pool. In contrast, TRRE placement districts expressed a high need for substitute teachers. In response, TRRE adopted a schedule that kept Fridays free from coursework and clinical placement attendance, which allowed the residents to enter the general substitution pool on these days, if they so chose.

The programs' different partnership structures also required slightly different approaches to preparation. Both programs aligned coursework to the future context in which residents would teach by adopting program-specific content foci throughout their programming. As a single-district partnership, Kern Urban had the opportunity to embed Bakersfield City School District (BCSD) culture into residents' coursework and coaching, such as by discussing specific district-adopted curricular products. In contrast, TRRE took a broader view, as residents would eventually be hired in multiple districts. Instead of embedding district practices, the program focused on the student groups and characteristics that were likely to be common across residents' future teaching contexts. Given that hiring districts tended to be in rural areas and serve multilingual, predominantly Latino/a populations, the program wove an emphasis on support for English learners throughout residents' coursework and clinical coaching. In both instances, the design of preparation aligned with residents' future teaching context.

Kern Urban's and TRRE's responsiveness to partners' needs is characteristic of the intensive collaboration involved between partners in the residency model. Residents benefit from this practice: Tailoring programs and preparation in a localized manner promotes residency graduates' readiness to take on the responsibilities of lead teaching within a specific context, both by cultivating their familiarity with district practices and ensuring their understanding of the unique learning needs of the student populations they serve. Districts benefit as well: The tailored preparation offered by these programs specifically targeted districts' high-need staffing areas and has the potential to promote retention. And, ultimately, the goal is for students to benefit from having fully prepared and effective teachers who understand student needs and are ready to provide the supports that will enable them to succeed.

# Endnotes

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12. Bakersfield City School District. *Human resources*. <https://web.archive.org/web/20230602081721/https://www.bcsd.com/domain/73#expand> (accessed 07/30/2023).
13. California State University, Bakersfield. (2022). *Kern Urban Teacher Residency handbook*. p. 8.
14. California State University, Bakersfield. (2022). *EDEL 5400: Literacy and social studies for diverse learners*. p. 2.
15. California State University, Bakersfield. (2022). *EDEL 5400: Literacy and social studies for diverse learners*. p. 7.
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17. Notably, this practice is not allowable by the Teacher Residency Grant Program (TRGP), which stipulates a single full-year placement. As of the 2022–23 academic year, all program residents were locally funded by Bakersfield City School District, which enabled the adoption of this practice.
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19. While the university had initially advocated for this option as a benefit of residency participation, the program no longer encourages residents to take this route. During the 2023–24 academic year, 3 out of 20 graduates from the most recent cohort of graduates opted for early completion. According to the coordinator of new teacher development for Bakersfield City School District, most residents benefit from and prefer the full 2 years of induction mentorship and inquiry that are embedded in the induction program. In some cases, graduates who had taken the early completion option later expressed that, in hindsight, they would have preferred an additional year of induction support.
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29. To enable Teacher Residency for Rural Education (TRRE) residents to take these courses as a cohort, the Tulare County Office of Education also made an agreement with California State University, Bakersfield to buy out the faculty hours required to facilitate TRRE-exclusive course sections.

## About the Authors

**Cathy Yun** is Deputy Director of EdPrepLab and a Senior Researcher on the Learning Policy Institute (LPI) Early Childhood and Educator Quality teams. Yun is committed to working to promote equity and inclusion throughout the education continuum from birth through higher education. Yun's work prior to LPI included comprehensive and continuous improvement efforts in a large-scale teacher preparation program; deep work with teacher residencies; development of partnerships with schools, districts, and community organizations; and support of local-level policies to positively impact the early childhood community. Yun holds a doctorate in Learning, Teaching, and Diversity from Vanderbilt University; a Master of Education in Neuroscience and Education and a master's degree in Reading Specialist from Teachers College, Columbia University; and bachelor's degrees in Psychology and English from Wellesley College.

**Julie Fitz** is a Researcher on LPI's Educator Quality team. She has previously worked at the Crane Center for Early Childhood Research and Policy and the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, where she conducted research on a range of education policy issues. Her engagement with issues related to educator quality is informed by her experiences as an elementary and middle school math teacher and a preservice teacher educator. Fitz holds a doctorate in Educational Studies with a specialization in Education Policy from Ohio State University; a Master of Arts in Philosophy and Education from Teachers College, Columbia University; and a bachelor's degree in Biochemistry from the University of Dayton.



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](http://learningpolicyinstitute.org)

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