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An Exploratory Study of Bilingual Teacher Residencies in California

By Magaly Lavadenz & Elvira G. Armas

Overview

This study explores the underexamined area of bilingual teacher residencies (BTRs) in California. We build from the research on teacher residencies to better understand the perspectives of program leaders- those who implement BTRs in Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs). We describe their insights into the implementation of BTRs at various stages of development and implementation based on the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing's (CTC) funding phases from 2018 to 2023.

Significance

Teacher residency programs offer pathways to teacher credentialing which address local teacher shortages and support candidates who are working alongside

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a "mentor" teacher in classrooms while simultaneously completing coursework in a teacher preparation program. The Residency Program model addresses designated teacher shortage areas (e.g., bilingual, science, special education) and overall areas such as: (1) initial preparation; (2) recruitment; and (3) retention (Barth et al., 2016). Researchers have found that graduates of these programs stay in the profession longer and are increasingly more diverse than other teacher preparation pathways (Guha et al., 2017; Patrick et al., 2023).

The Center for Equity for English Learners (CEEL) at Loyola Marymount University (LMU) partnered with the Californians Dedication to Education Foundation (CDEF) to investigate BTRs within the California Teacher Residency Lab to examine the factors contributing to the success and challenges of addressing the bilingual teacher shortage through residency programs in the state. Given the scarcity of Bilingual Teacher Residency (BTR) research, this study contributes to this growing body of research.

Literature Review

We draw on several broad bodies of literature to frame BTR program implementation. BTRs have not arisen nor are implemented in isolation of the larger education ecosystem. Lavadenz et al. (2023) posit Critical Multilingual Policy Ecology (CMPE) as a framework to identify the sociopolitical-historic dimensions of bilingual/dual language education in the United States and California. Contextual factors impact teacher preparation, access and equity issues for marginalized student populations, policy implementation such as Proposition 58 and Global California 2030 (CDE, 2018), as well as power, class and gentrification in programming, where "bilingualism is seen as a means to more power, a stark contrast to what critical consciousness raising in bilingual education seeks to do: interrogate power in DLBE learning spaces" (Palmer et al., 2019).

District-University Bilingual/Dual Language Teacher Partnerships

Teacher residencies depend on the working relationships and partnerships between LEAs and IHEs who work together to identify consistent core practices, roles and responsibilities and implementation protocols. Garcia and Garza (2019) contend that these programs are partnerships between educator preparation programs, school districts, and community organizations that recruit and prepare local community members to teach, such as in Chicago's BTR where they invest in their own employees. There are, however, few studies on BTRs. And while it is too early to analyze program outcomes, research suggests that teachers who are cultivated from local schools and the local community often have high rates of retention in the profession, a promising trend given the disproportionate rates of attrition among teachers of color (Garcia & Garza, 2019, p.18).

Other general areas of promising practice for BTR university-district partnerships

include benefits for multilingual teacher candidates, mentorship, and coursework, as developed by Project BEST (Bilingual Educators of Science and Technology) who relied on the identification of residents who had backgrounds in science and bilingual proficiency (Hogan et al., 2015). Using a layered mentoring approach, the program provided ongoing professional development to develop a professional learning community and included coursework that was co-taught to include science and bilingual methods.

Herrera (2022) found that BTRs are effective when they take an assets-based approach to bilingualism and teacher development to combat language hierarchies and 'deficit approaches' to bilingual students. Effective BTR partnership programs thus counter deficit approaches by uncovering these beliefs and by developing critical consciousness about race, national origin, language variations and translanguaging as well as class and cultural (mis)conceptions.

Build a More Diverse Teaching Profession—
Multilingualism, Cross-Culturality, and Inclusion

Curated from research reviews and recommendations from a broad cross-section of national experts, *The Building a Strong and Diverse Teaching Profession Playbook* offers tools and resources for addressing teacher shortages and diversifying the workforce by drawing upon prior research on effective practices for recruiting, preparing, supporting, and retaining teachers, including examples of state legislation and local and state-level policies and initiatives (Partnership for the Future of Learning, 2021). More specific to BTRs, targeted and localized teacher preparation of its residents within their own communities and schools can, in turn, contribute to retention goals and efforts in "grow your own" local teacher pipelines. This emerging body of literature addresses the parallel efforts for active recruitment and preparation to increase retention rates for bilingual and bicultural teachers (Herrera, 2022).

Azar's study reveals three approaches to teacher recruitment and development for teacher residencies which contribute to efficacy in recruiting and developing teachers of color: (1) Recruiting for Diverse Candidates, (2) Culturally Responsive Support, and (3) Intentionally Designing Programs for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (Azar et al., 2020). However, the intersection between the financial barriers and recruitment efforts of Teacher Residency Programs are hindrances in recruitment of teachers of color, first generation and bilingual/multilingual residents. State and/or federal financial support are essential but are not sufficient. "Improving long-term sustainability for residencies should consider reallocating human and fiscal resources, reducing costs for residents while also creating visibility/public interest/resources, reinvesting savings from districts' decreased need for recruitment and onboarding new teachers, and diversifying funding sources" (Hirschboeck et al., 2022).

Bilingual Teacher Preparation

Researchers and school districts recognize the importance of the linguistic, cultural, and pedagogic capital that bilingually certified teachers bring to their schools and communities, regardless of the type of instructional program (Cantu, 2002; Gándara et al., 2006). BTRs offer teachers opportunities to engage with their own cultural and linguistic identities, fostering long-lasting communities and networks of educators (Nuñez et al., 2021). Multilingual Pedagogic Content Knowledge represents the linguistic and cultural knowledge, skills and abilities required of bilingual teachers to facilitate learning across two languages (Lavadenz, 2019; Aquino-Sterling & Rodriguez-Valls, 2016). Beyond the basic linguistic competencies bilingual teachers possess, they enact the greater complexities of cross-linguistic resource sharing of their emerging bilingual students in ways that maximize the connections between languages (Koda, 2004).

Theoretical Perspective

We use critical policy analysis (CPA) (Diem et al., 2014) to capture and analyze the perspectives of grantees' implementation of the BTRs based on their implementation phase and context. Using a CPA approach, we "explore and inter-rogate ways in which [BTR implementation] address the historical, sociopolitical and geographic contexts" (Diem & Brooks, 2022, p3) around equity in bilingual dual language education through a critical analysis of the program development, implementation, partnerships, and structures instantiated.

Two inquiry questions guided this investigation:

1. What are the experiences and perspectives of bilingual teacher residency program leaders?

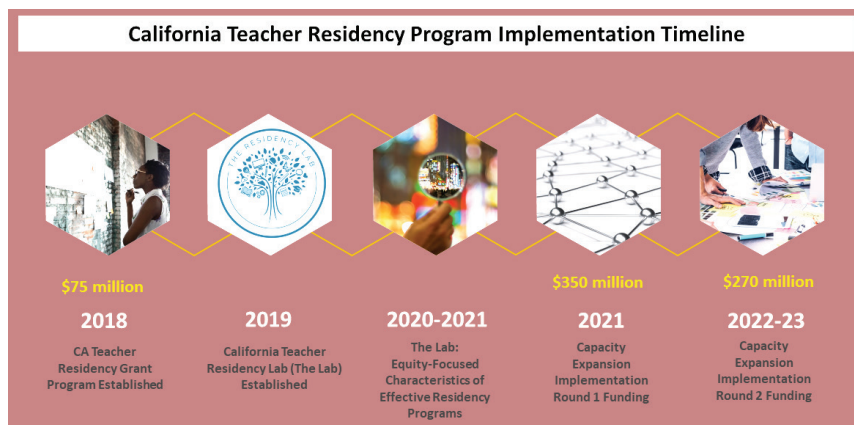2. What are the implications and recommendations for policy and practices?

We first identified the BTRs funded between 2018-2023. We offer a funding history, then "map" the locations, types of residencies funded, and target numbers of bilingual residents.

Evolution of State/CTC Teacher Residency Policies and Funding

Established in 2019, the California Teacher Residency Grant Program creates sustainable and long-term solutions to address the state's teacher shortages, especially pressing in school districts serving low-income students and students of color where there is also a need to diversify the workforce (Eiler White et al., 2020). The California legislature allocated $75 million toward residencies in 2018, $350 million in 2021, and $270 million in 2022, administered by the CTC (Patrick et al., 2023). Figure 1 outlines the CTC's Teacher Residency Grant Program implementation timeline and associated funding trajectory through 2023. Leveraging

these funding opportunities, partnerships between IHEs and LEAs undertook the challenge of developing sustainable financial frameworks to design, implement and expand programs. Yun and Demoss (2020) analyzed the various financial strategies devised by residency programs, which they categorized under the framework of the "3 Rs" of sustainable residency development. The "3 Rs" of sustainable residency development include reallocating financial resources, reducing costs of resident programs, and reinvesting savings (Yun & Demoss, 2020).

Figure 1
California Teacher Residency Program Implementation Timeline

California Teacher Residency Program Implementation Timeline

| $75 million			$350 million	$270 million
2018	**2019**	**2020-2021**	**2021**	**2022-23**
CA Teacher Residency Grant Program Established	California Teacher Residency Lab (The Lab) Established	The Lab: Equity-Focused Characteristics of Effective Residency Programs	Capacity Expansion Implementation Round 1 Funding	Capacity Expansion Implementation Round 2 Funding

The California Teacher Residency Lab (The Lab) was established in 2019. The Californians Dedicated to Education Foundation (CDEF) manages the Lab to strengthen capacity to provide equity-driven, clinically rich teacher preparation, and support. The Lab collaborates with IHEs, LEAs, and county offices of education (COE) grantees serving as a vital channel to provide ongoing development and resources for educators. Their work is guided by ten equity-focused characteristics of an effective residency program (California Teacher Residency Lab, 2021). (See Appendix.)

Mapping the Landscape of California's Bilingual Teacher Residencies

Figure 2 illustrates the geographic location and type of BTR grant funding. Residencies offer multiple types of credential programs, not limited to bilingual authorization candidates who may participate in simultaneous or sequential credential/authorization pathways.
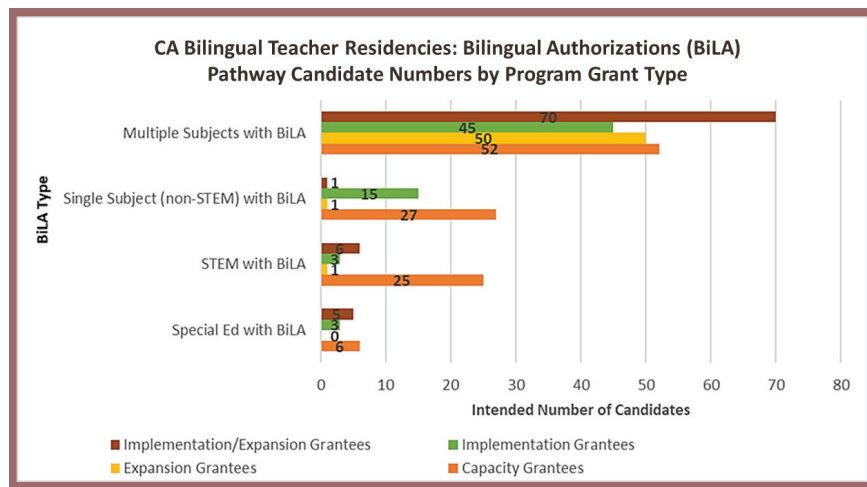
Figure 2
Bilingual Teacher Residency Programs by Type (Source: CTC 2023)
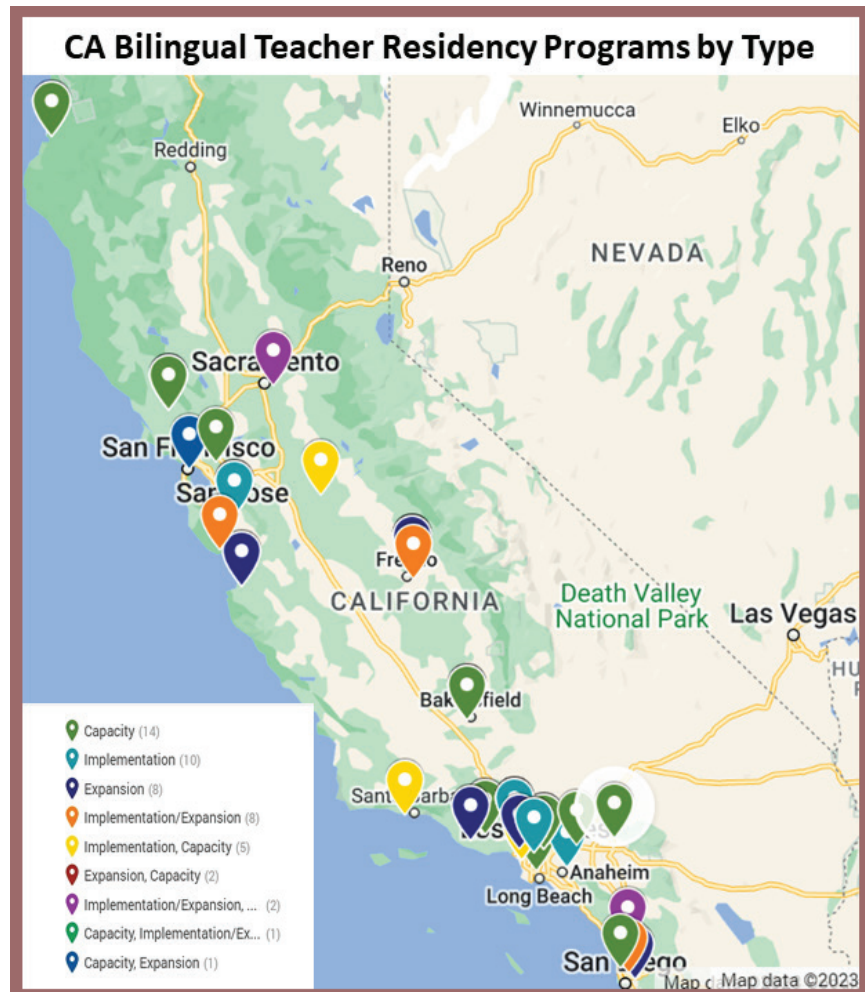
As Figure 3 illustrates, across all residency grant types, an expected total of 310 target number of bilingual candidates will be served.

Figure 3
2021-2023 CTC Grant Funded CA BTRP- Target Bilingual Candidate Numbers by Bilingual Authorization and Grant Type (Source: CTC, 2023)

Methodology

We used an Exploratory Descriptive Qualitative Research Design (EDQ) and the Dedoose software program to conduct the thematic analysis (TA, Clarke & Braun, 2017). TA yielded several key findings regarding BTR implementation. Our study began in April 2023. From a convenience sample, five participants volunteered and were selected to participate in semi-structured interviews based on their roles and first-hand experiences as leaders for their BTR program (Polit & Beck, 2010). Participants represent three BTRs in various phases of capacity building and program implementation. Interviews (45-60 minutes) were conducted via Zoom and included artifact collection. During the interviews program leaders reflected on the development and implications of their Bilingual Residency programs, highlighting successes, and challenges, and offering recommendations for policy and practices.

Using Dedoose to analyze the qualitative interview data, the research team first became familiar with the qualitative data to gain an initial understanding and to create initial codes by identifying meaningful segments in the data that related to the inquiry questions. These were subsequently refined with corresponding descriptions to ensure clarity and consistency during the coding process (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Conducting a thematic analysis with an inductive approach contributed to developing rich and contextually grounded insights resulting in four findings.

Findings

Finding 1:
Forging New Relationships to Build
on Community Cultural and Linguistic Wealth

Systematic Processes and Relationships

Leaders indicated that initial implementation phases required establishing systematic processes to (1) implement targeted recruitment efforts to foster the development of a local teacher pipeline to address teacher shortages within their community and, (2) recruit a diverse teaching workforce that brings the "linguistic and cultural repertoire of the community" (Program Leader Interviewee).

These cross-system partnerships required facilitated discussions to negotiate shared vision, values, and roles as elaborated by this program leader, "We didn't have that clear of a vision. I think the values were there, but in terms of how that was going to work out, that really evolved with the partners, but also really between myself and the Bilingual Education faculty member."

Recruitment Reflects Community Wealth

Two interviewees indicated that their BTRs employ recruitment processes focused on international candidates from Spanish-speaking countries, with a focus on individuals from Spain to address the local teacher shortage. One leader offered insights into the program's excitement in shifting the recruitment strategy from recruiting international Spanish-speaking students with limited community cultural knowledge to prioritizing recruitment from within the local community. Similarly, another leader highlighted the challenges associated with recruiting international students who lack cultural knowledge of local communities and expressed optimism about the prospects of creating a sustainable local teacher pipeline:

> So, we were very intentional about that, and about whom we wanted our students to be, whom we wanted to recruit in terms of our residents, and of course, having a Bilingual Teacher Residency, it lends itself to recruiting specific types of students. We definitely wanted to have Latinx bilingual students that were from the community, and that's who we mostly were able to recruit.

Finding 2:
Designing Bilingual Teacher Residency
District-University Partnerships and Programs

Co-Create Systems with Shared Vision

Participants discussed co-creating systems and processes to foster partnerships stemming from a collective understanding of the local community landscapes and a shared vision to guide BTR-specific program design:

> … Just having the opportunity to collaborate with the school district that was really dedicated to serving its community and… a believer in bilingualism and bilingual education. Ideologically it wasn't always like full alignment. But I think we got there later. But I think we did start from the understanding that we value bilingualism.

Community Landscapes Guide BTR-specific Program Design

One leader described the need for BTRs to assess the LEA's bilingual teacher needs and program growth to determine how to integrate and (re)align bilingual program requirements to prepare residents to attain their multiple subject credentials along with the bilingual authorization:

> … what we did is we designed a course sequence that integrated all of the coursework together so that students complete their bilingual authorizations [simultaneously] with their multiple-subject credentials.

Interviewees reported that a comprehensive program revisioning was often preceded by a course change approach that included attention to the program standards as well as to LEA context and student population, as described by this program lead:

> Prior to the revision of the courses, we looked at the dyslexia standards which needed to get integrated this year, and the literacy standards which are also integrated, and then merge the two programs, and we wanted to make sure to the greatest extent possible we had overlap with our existing bilingual authorization program and all of our syllabi… we're also emphasizing practices for students who come from cultures that have non-written language so that we can honor that … we are sure to be inclusive of other languages, and then also to be very aware of languages which historically are spoken.

A reported challenge was the misalignment in district-university teaching ideologies, including not sharing the same vision of bilingual instructional practices such as translanguaging. Addressing this became paramount to avoid opposing messages and to maintain the focus on thinking about children holistically and celebrating and centering their bilingualism and their identities.

Finding 3:
The Burden of Support:
Augmented Financial Barriers for Bilingual Teacher Residents

Co-developing Strategies

Three leaders discussed the financial barriers for bilingual residents, signaling high university tuition costs and additional coursework for the bilingual authorization. Both IHEs and LEAs discussed strategies to help residents meet financial needs.

This leader reflected on the program's strategy to help teacher residents meet their financial needs:

> [T]he way that we were able to plan it out during our planning period was to divide the stipend into 12 payments across the year. So, they didn't necessarily get a bulk payment. We were able to work it out so that they can get paid throughout. That was still a challenge for students…we were very intentional, at least for the first semester for them to have Fridays off to get opportunities to work.

Finding 4:
Bilingual Teacher Pedagogies:
Critical Consciousness and Culturally Responsive Teaching

Inclusive and Equitable Learning Environments

Leaders expressed the importance of developing teachers' critical consciousness to create inclusive and equitable learning environments that value and support students' diverse linguistic and cultural identities and address the needs of all students. By building their critical consciousness lens, they hoped teachers recognize social and systemic inequalities and understand the intersectionality of students' cultural identities and experiences shaped by students' socioeconomic conditions, race, gender, and upbringing. One leader underscored the importance of this for residents, mentors, and administrators noting:

> Locally there has been a big push in the last couple of years for our administration and our teachers as well to be really focusing on using the equity lens. And there's been a lot more work. I think this program, the readings, and the philosophy…will really support these folks coming in <u>and</u> our mentor teachers to … be uber-focused on the needs of our students that we're serving in our dual language programs…we still have room to grow also.

Leaders also acknowledged the importance of critical consciousness within the framework of culturally relevant pedagogy.

Recommendations

BTR leaders provided three key recommendations for policy and practice to address the ongoing and projected California's bilingual teacher shortages at the state and local levels, outlined here:

1. Create Coherent and Articulated Cross-State Agency Efforts

Our findings reveal a need for multiple agencies and institutions across the education ecosystem to align, provide, and communicate key information about the impacts of BTRs.

- Refine systems to support BTR implementation and document impact.

● Disaggregate data on bilingual authorization completion to highlight the BTR pathway.

● Track BTR placements and retention.

● Invest in relevant BTR research and case studies (bright spots) to inform scalability and sustainability.

2. Differentiate Bilingual Networks of Support

Program leaders conveyed the importance of building networks of support to strengthen the collaboration of statewide teacher residency programs. These networks of support would strengthen collaboration and peer learning by allowing program leaders to share their experiences, exchange ideas, celebrate successes, and have access to a wider range of resources and materials.

● Strengthen the collaboration between statewide-BTRs and other organizations focused on building the bilingual teacher workforce.

● Differentiate resources and support to define and operationalize Characteristics of Effective Bilingual Teacher Residency Programs.

● Prioritize opportunities for the Statewide Technical Assistance Center Grant Program to provide cohesive and differentiated support for BTRs.

3. Strengthen Bilingual Teacher Residency Communities of Practice

Streamline existing resources available for teacher residency programs so that the programs do not have to recreate the wheel. Share tools and timelines of capacity building and program implementation to facilitate the success of the programs and not focus on recreating tools or timelines. Strengthen existing communities of practice to build on existing programs of study and syllabi.

● Coordinate BTR-peer learning opportunities allowing leaders to share their experiences, exchange ideas, celebrate successes, and have access to a wider range of resources and materials.

● Strengthen and streamline existing communities of practice to build on existing programs of study and syllabi.

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Appendix
California Teacher Residency Lab- Characteristics and Evidence of an Effective California Teacher Residency Program[1]

The *Characteristics and Evidence of an Effective California Teacher Residency Program* (the *Characteristics)* serve as a common framework for teacher residencies in the state. They exemplify the scope and complexity of the development of teacher residency programs by which all partnerships can define and develop their program implementation.

1. Equity and justice are defined and advanced at all levels of residency work.	Mission, vision, and theory of change make explicit commitments to equity and justice.
	Short- and long-term residency goals include evidence of equity and justice.
	Recruitment and retention targets include specific numbers of mentors and teachers reflecting the LEA's and community's unique diversity.
	Formal, consistent, and institutionalized spaces to discuss equity and justice work.
	Institutionalized affinity spaces created and led by and for residency community members.
	Action research centered on addressing equity focused opportunities of practice.
2. Authentic partnerships between local educational agencies (LEAs), accredited credentialing institutions, Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs) such as CSUs, and other organizations exist.	Residency teams include leaders and decision-makers from IHEs, LEAs, schools, collective bargaining entities, and local communities.
	MOU or Partnership agreements between or among all residency partners.
	Shared mission, vision and theory of change for the residency.
	Entire residency team—especially decision-makers—reflect the LEA's and community's unique diversity
	IHEs have the capacity (or a clear plan to develop the capacity) to meet LEA hiring needs

	Staffing, roles, and responsibilities are delineated across the residency.
	Established norms for collaboration and decision-making.
	Collaboratively defined and data-based residency goals and milestones that are revisited over time
3. The residency system is financially sustainable.	Program costs include resources and personnel necessary for effective implementation.
	Incentives (i.e. resident, mentor stipends) are defined and tied to the value of the residency program to the LEA.
	3-5 year strategic plan exists, tied to mission, vision, theory of change, and long-term budget.
	Long-term budget projection is defined, including increasing cost savings to the LEA.
	Long-term commitment by all partners to contribute the necessary resources to operationalize the program.
	All available funding sources are examined and accessed.
	Revenue sources are diverse.
4. Formative and outcome data are collected, analyzed, and used for continuous improvement.	Data-sharing agreement between stakeholders.
	Program assessment and evaluation plan with multiple measures that are all tied to the Characteristics and Evidence of an Effective California Teacher Residency Program.
	Protocols to communicate about and share data.
	Regular meetings scheduled to analyze data across stakeholder groups.
	Data used in real-time to make revisions to residency program.
	Mentors model how to collect, disaggregate, and make evidence-based analyses that inform their teaching practice.
5. Specific hiring needs are defined and filled each year with the recruitment of resident candidates who reflect the LEA's and community's unique diversity.	Resident recruitment targets set based on LEA need and student demographics.
	Recruitment efforts target and prioritize candidates who reflect the students they will serve
	Resident recruitment strategy includes explicit tactics to recruit candidates who reflect the students they will serve.

	Resident and program expectations shared with candidates.
	Recruitment processes include differentiated support for candidates who reflect the students they will serve (e.g., testing support or waivers, flexible deadlines to apply).
	Resident selection strategy screens and vets potential residents using multiple measures (e.g., paper application, interview, model lesson, group tasks).
	Resident selection strategy includes assessment of candidate awareness of the impact of identity and institutionalized racism on teaching and learning in California.
	Resident recruitment and selection utilizes and lifts up the work of current residents, mentors, principals and partners.
6. Residents engage in a full year of clinical practice teaching alongside an accomplished mentor teacher.	Resident co-teaches alongside a mentor teacher for no less than one full school year.
	Resident gradually takes on teaching responsibilities throughout the school year.
	Resident has consistent opportunities to observe other mentors and debrief observations at the school site.
	Residents are coached, assessed and given regular feedback by mentors, teacher educators, and program staff.
	IHE coursework and other professional learning opportunities are designed or adjusted to support and align with clinical practice.
7. Coursework and professional learning opportunities are tightly integrated with clinical practice.	Coursework, professional learning opportunities, and clinical experiences are aligned through a set of prioritized skills or day 1 ready skills.
	A shared observation rubric/framework is used to assess residents on agreed-upon performance benchmarks.
	Scope and sequence of coursework and professional opportunities allows residents to practice and receive feedback on skills before being applied and assessed.
	All teacher educators and mentors (across coursework, professional learning opportunities, and clinical practice) effectively employ the shared observation rubric/framework to support and track resident growth.
	Residents understand that teaching is an act of social justice and that examining (in)justices must inform their teaching practice.

	Residents reflect on the growth and impact of their teaching practice.
8. All residents are mentored by accomplished mentor teachers who reflect their LEA's and community's unique diversity.	Mentors have at least three years of teaching experience and a clear credential.
	Mentors have a record of successful teaching, growth mindset, receptiveness to feedback, and willingness to disrupt problematic and racist actions.
	Mentors reflect the teachers and students they serve.
	Mentor selection strategy screens and vets potential mentors using multiple measures (e.g., paper application, interview, model lesson and debrief session, colleague recommendation, etc.).
	Mentor selection strategy includes assessment of a potential mentor's awareness of the impact of identity and institutionalized racism on teaching and learning in California.
	Mentors receive specific training for the mentor teacher role.
	Mentors receive ongoing professional development tied to resident learning and need.
	Professional development builds capacity to mentor during and around TK-12 instructional time.
	Mentors use knowledge of equity principles and culturally responsive pedagogy to support their resident to address issues of equity, bias, and access to standards-based curriculum.
	Mentors use mentoring stances strategically to engage their resident in collaborative problem-solving and reflection.
	Mentors develop the resident's abilities to self-assess and co-assess practice based on evidence, to set professional goals, and monitor progress.
	Mentors support residents to ground the critical analysis of teaching practice in student experience and learning.
9. Clusters of mentors and residents support and learn from one another at residency partner *Teaching Schools*.	Recruitment or tactical outreach plan for potential *Teaching Schools*.
	Teaching School administrators prioritize residents in hiring processes.
	Teaching School selection criteria and process defined

	and prioritizes schools whose students reflect the LEA's and community's diversity.
	Some/all coursework and professional learning opportunities take place on site in *Teaching School* classrooms.
	Professional learning communities at each *Teaching School* include administrators, mentors, and residents.
	Administrators, mentors, residency graduates and residents examine ways in which white supremacy shows up in grading systems, perpetuates and masks inequities, and discredits improvements made by students over time.
10. Residency graduates are supported to continue their professional learning and develop as leaders.	Residents are prioritized in partner LEA hiring.
	Formal induction support is provided to all graduates.
	Professional learning includes guaranteed and opt-in opportunities for graduates to continue to learn, grow and develop as leaders.
	Apprentice mentor opportunities.
	Post-induction professional opportunities (e.g. Master's Degree, National Board Certification).

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Note

[1] California Teacher Residency Lab (2021). *Characteristics and evidence of an effective California teacher residency program*, https://cdefoundation.org/staging/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/1.-External_-Nov2021_Effective-CA-Teacher-Residency-Characteristics-Indicators-1.pdf