

Evaluation of the Connecticut Teacher Residency Program

Cortney Rowland, Ph.D.

Tabitha Grossman, Ph.D.

Kevin Levay, Ph.D.

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About NCTR



The National Center for Teacher Residencies (NCTR) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to developing, launching, supporting, and accelerating the impact of teacher residency programs. Headquartered in Chicago, NCTR's mission is to disrupt historical educational inequities by advancing the teacher

residency movement to prepare effective, diverse, culturally responsive educators. For more information about NCTR, please visit nctrresidencies.org.

About the Authors

Cortney Rowland, Ph.D., joined NCTR in 2021 as the Director of State and Federal Policy. In this role, she leads the development and implementation of the overall policy priorities and strategy for the organization. She holds a bachelor's degree in sociology from Ohio University, a master's degree in sociology from Bowling Green State University, and a Ph.D. in sociology from Loyola University Chicago.

Tabitha Grossman, Ph.D., is NCTR's Chief External Relations Officer. In her role she leads the organization's strategy for external communications; research and evaluation; and state and federal policy. She joined NCTR's staff in 2018. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science; a Master of Education degree in counselor education; a Post Master's degree in administration and supervision, and a Ph.D. in educational leadership from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia.

Kevin Levay, Ph.D., is NCTR's Associate Director of Research and Evaluation. In this role, he supports NCTR and partner programs in collecting, analyzing, and reporting data to demonstrate and enhance the effectiveness of teacher residencies. He joined NCTR in 2020. He holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Temple University and a master's degree and doctorate in political science both from Northwestern University.

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Photo on the Cover: Kari Smith (left) is a mentor teacher and Kianna Beamon (right) is a teacher resident at the Connecticut Teacher Residency Program. This photo was taken at CREC Museum Academy in Bloomfield, Conn.

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NCTR Evaluation of the Connecticut Teacher Residency Program

Introduction

Founded in 2019, the [Connecticut Teacher Residency Program \(CT-TRP\)](#) is a teacher preparation pathway that partners with school districts as a “grow-your-own” model, leading to Connecticut state certification. The program began under the auspices of the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC), one of the state’s Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs). CT-TRP has grown and now serves five regions across the state and partners with 26 different districts. The [mission of CT-TRP](#) is to provide college graduates with an alternate route to certification based on a teacher residency model that focuses on recruiting, preparing, increasing and retaining teachers of color in elementary schools in Connecticut.

CT-TRP is also a member of the [National Center for Teacher Residencies \(NCTR\) Network](#), a national network of nearly 60 member organizations providing teacher residency programs across the country. NCTR’s Network is designed to provide comprehensive programmatic support from NCTR’s consultants. Members in NCTR’s Network collaborate and exchange best practices to continuously improve their programs and influence teacher preparation nationally. NCTR also has a Research and Evaluation department which was commissioned to conduct this evaluation of the CT-TRP.

This evaluation has four main purposes:

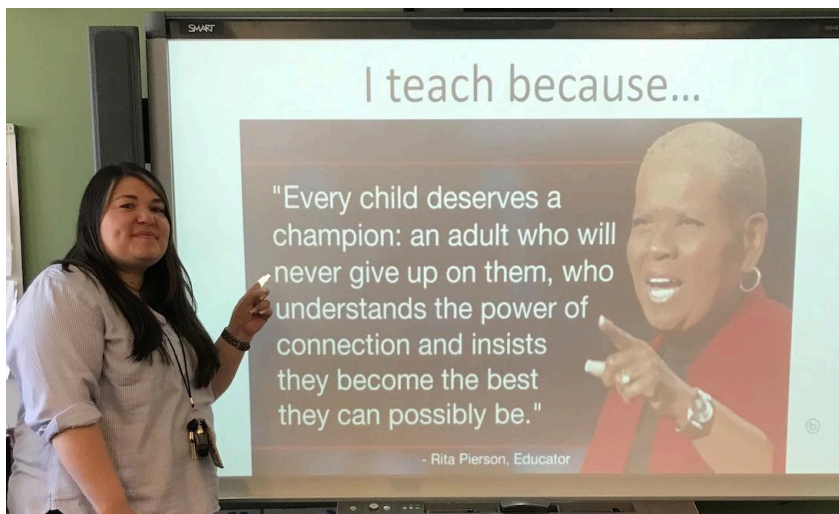
- 1.** Identify the extent to which the program is achieving its mission to recruit, prepare, and retain teachers of color and diversify the Connecticut teacher workforce;
- 2.** Identify the impact of the program, particularly on teachers of color;
- 3.** Identify the strengths and areas for continuous improvement in terms of its mentor recruitment, preparation, and support; and
- 4.** Make policy recommendations to continuously improve and advance teacher residency programs.

CT-TRP has been committed to continuous improvement and enhancing its model over time. Toward that effort, this evaluation reflects the first four years of implementation at CT-TRP (2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23), and offers a preliminary examination

of its impact and how the program can improve the experience for teacher residents, particularly teacher residents of color.

State Context and Overview of CT-TRP

Connecticut, like most states across the country, is struggling with a teacher shortage. There are multiple data points that illustrate this. For example, as of the 2022-2023 school year, the state had 1,221 teacher vacancies (Nguyen et al., 2021). Additionally, there has been a -7.3% change in the state's number of enrollees in teacher preparation programs over a five-year period from 2016-17 to 2020-21 (Learning Policy Institute, 2023). The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) identified several shortage areas for the 2022-2023 school year, including math, special education, paraprofessionals and education support personnel, and bilingual education—many of these shortage areas are statewide and many are located primarily in the Alliance Districts.¹



Aurora Hill is a graduate of the Connecticut Teacher Residency Program. This photo was taken at CREC Reggio Magnet School of the Arts in Avon, Conn.

Furthermore, the state has had a challenge with educator diversity. The student population has been rapidly diversifying and teacher diversity is not keeping pace. For example, the statewide percentage of educators of color in 2020 was 8.9% while 47% of the state's students were students of color at that same time (Connecticut State

Department of Education, 2023). Research shows that while teachers of color confer benefits to all students, they are particularly advantageous for students of color. Black educators have been shown to contribute significantly to student achievement among Black students in both reading and math; in particular, lower-performing students benefit substantially from a teacher of the same race (Dee, 2004) (Egalite et al., 2015). What's more, Black students who have a single Black teacher in grades third through fifth are

¹ The Alliance District program is a targeted investment in Connecticut's 33 lowest-performing districts. Connecticut General Statute Section 10-262u establishes a process for identifying Alliance Districts and allocating increased Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funding to support district strategies to increase student outcomes and close achievement gaps.

more likely to graduate from high school and consider college, particularly Black males (Gershenson et al., 2018).

Starting in 2016 and over a period of several years, the state has explicitly focused on diversifying its teacher workforce through various policy actions, such as enacting a loan reimbursement grant for minority educators; creating the Minority Teacher Recruitment Policy Oversight Council within CSDE to advise the education commissioner on activities related to minority teacher recruitment; and requiring CSDE to conduct an annual survey of students on the effectiveness of minority teacher recruitment programs in the state and reporting annually to the Appropriations and Education committees on the effectiveness of such programs (Walker, 2022).²

One notable policy move in 2016 was [S.B. 379](#), “*An Act Concerning the Recommendations of the Minority Teacher Recruitment Task Force*.” The bill charged CSDE with reviewing and approving proposals for alternate routes to certification programs for people employed as school support staff and charged the State Board of Education with issuing an initial educator certificate, valid for three years, to those who complete an alternate route to certification program. Those who could enroll in such programs were participants who had a bachelor’s degree and who have been employed as school support staff. According to the bill, participants in such programs were required to complete a one-year residency in a full-time position for 10 school months at a local or regional board of education under the supervision of a certified administrator or teacher and a supervisor from an institution or hosting organization. This legislation laid the foundation for CT-TRP.

Also in 2016, the Connecticut State Board of Education adopted a five-year comprehensive plan which outlined three broad goals, one of which was “Great Teachers and Leaders” (Goal 3) (State of Connecticut: State Board of Education).³ This goal focused on developing and deploying strategies for school districts statewide that ensure the most effective educators are in every school and classroom, including making progress on increasing the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of the state’s educator workforce. As a result, CSDE put in place a variety of structures, programs, partnerships, and accountability measures to implement the comprehensive plan, including Goal 3, and focused on strategies to increase the number of educators of color to 10% by 2021.

² The term “minority” as it is referenced throughout these state policies means individuals whose race is defined as other than white, or whose ethnicity is defined as Hispanic or Latino by the federal Office of Management and Budget for use by the Bureau of Census (CGS § 10-155l).

³ The Talent Office team has developed a strategy profile with targets, measurable outcomes and established metrics specifically designed to increase the number of educators of color employed in Connecticut’s public schools from 8.3% to 10% by 2021.

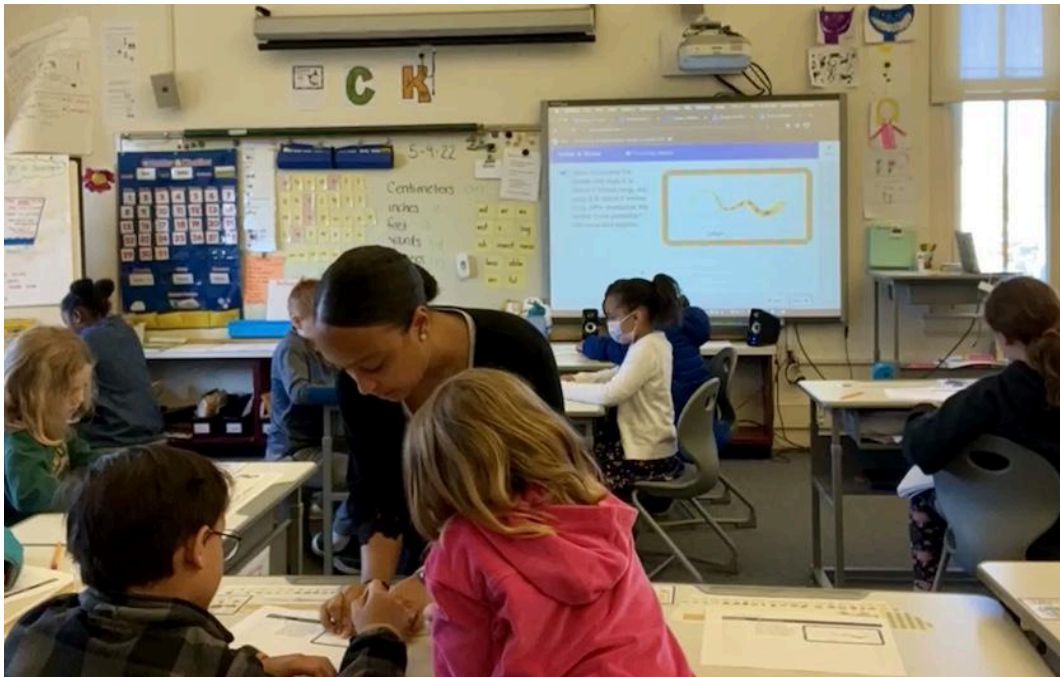
As these efforts were progressing at the state level, in 2017-2018, staff and leadership at CREC began to consider potential new strategies for recruiting and retaining teachers of color to address the gap in race and ethnicity between the region's teachers and students. They put together a steering committee to create a plan to design a program to train their own teachers in a grow your own model and become an approved certification-only teacher preparation program (Sims et al., 2023). They focused on recruiting educators from historically marginalized communities, and eliminating barriers that typically keep them from being able to enter and remain in the teaching profession, such as financial costs and state certification exams. The program was granted full approval for the period May 1, 2019 through April 30, 2026 and was awarded a \$5,000 grant (The RESC Alliance, 2019). Initially, CT-TRP worked with one school district. It now has four cohorts across 26 school districts and five regions, and offers both an elementary education and special education licensure pathway. This past academic year, CT-TRP had a cohort of 42 teacher residents—the highest ever enrollment (Sims et al., 2023). Several grants, funds from the Regional Educational Service Center (RESC), partner district revenues, and federal funds cover the operational costs and direct benefits to teacher residents for the program (Sims et al., 2023).

CT-TRP is designed with a social justice lens, aiming to meet the holistic needs of teachers and students from historically marginalized communities by creating a culturally affirming residency year experience. Teacher residents engage in 18 months of coursework while also spending a school year in a classroom with a mentor teacher. The district hires the candidate during the residency year and pays for their salary and benefits and provides additional support while the program provides coursework, assessments, and coaching. The program is tuition-free and candidates receive financial support for books and some certification exam fees.

Multiple times a month, CT-TRP staff observe teacher residents and provide culturally responsive, high-touch support. CT-TRP selects course instructors who are practitioners, such as teacher leaders and school district administrators, who can create culturally affirming classrooms for teacher residents. Mentor teachers receive regular professional development, particularly in cultural competence. The resident works side-by-side with their mentor teacher and learns all aspects of teaching, applying what is learned in the program courses. Mentor teachers provide feedback and coaching for residents focused on student learning and best practices.

After completing the residency year, candidates initially earn a Residency Educator Certificate and receive coaching and professional development provided by CT-TRP staff and the district while they are the teacher of record, which increases the likelihood that

graduates stay in the profession (Rockman et al., 2018; Worley & Zerbin, 2023; Silva et al., 2015). In the first year, CT-TRP provides a sponsor teacher who will participate in at least one hour biweekly meetings with the CT-TRP teacher, ongoing professional development, and monthly coaching calls with CT-TRP staff. During the first 4 months of their second year, teacher residents take a class called Planning Seminar and are mentored by a sponsor teacher for support. After a successful experience, candidates then can apply for an Initial Teaching Certification and will continue to teach in that district for a minimum of three years.



Deisha Quinones is a teacher resident at the Connecticut Teacher Residency Program. This photo was taken at Regional Multicultural Magnet School in New London, Conn.

Shortly after CT-TRP was launched, in 2021, the Connecticut General Assembly passed a [biennial budget bill](#) that provided state funds for and charged CSDE with developing a process for administering the “minority candidate certification, retention or residency year program” designed to assist (1) minority candidates in enrolling in a teacher residency program to become full-time, certified teachers, and (2) local and regional boards of education in hiring and retaining such minority candidates. The definition of teacher residency program in the bill is, “*a certification program approved by the State Board of Education that requires participants to complete a residency in which such participants serve (A) in a position otherwise requiring professional certification, and (B) in a full-time position for ten school months at a local or regional board of education in the state under the supervision of (i) a certified administrator or teacher, and (ii) a*

supervisor from the regional educational service center or private, nonprofit teacher or administrator operating such certification program.” The focus of the legislation prioritizes Alliance districts partnering with teacher residency programs to enroll, train, and then hire “minority” candidates, and the state made funds available for the effort through formula grants (State of Connecticut: General Assembly, 2021).⁴

By 2023, teacher diversity across the state had increased to 11.2% and the state continues to focus on strategies to address the teacher shortage and diversify the teacher workforce (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2023). The 2023 legislative session focused on education and among other things, the results included (Revello, 2023):

- Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) funding to 18 school districts across the state that are interested in starting an Educators Rising “grow-your-own” high school program;
- Scholarship funds for educators of color to pursue education;
- Funds to cover financial barriers for licensure fees and testing;
- Support for the development of two teacher registered apprenticeship pilot programs, one of which is based on CT-TRP and will serve as the model for future programs; and
- Funds for a campaign to attract more educators and paraeducators to the profession.

The [2023-2025 biennial budget](#) funded teacher residencies at \$1.5 million each year for FY24 and FY25. This funding is for CT-TRP and is supported by ESSER/ARP funds.

Another aspect of the state’s policy context that is relevant to addressing the teacher shortage and diversifying the workforce as well as the experiences of teacher residency program candidates is the state’s teacher certification and licensure system. The state’s regulations have not been updated since 1998. The current process poses challenges to potential educators (e.g., time intensive and not cost efficient) and does not offer pathways to accommodate the array of experiences aspiring teachers bring to the process of preparing to become a teacher. This is particularly true for, for example, paraprofessionals, substitute teachers, or career changers (Sims et al., 2023). Several legislative bills were introduced to modify current state certification requirements over

⁴ CSDE released information about this program and funding opportunity in a memo on March 8, 2023. For various reasons including formula funding calculations and guidance on how funding can be used, the Alliance districts sent [a letter](#) in May 2023 to state legislators requesting legislative action to relieve them from the fiscal obligations of funding Minority Teacher Recruitment through the Alliance Grant as stated in C.G.S. Section 10-156gg, the Minority Candidate Certification, Retention or Residency Year Program.

the past several years to reduce barriers and increase access to certification, and other bills have added to the demands. [CSDE has also made a number of regulatory changes related to teacher certification and licensure](#). For example, in June 2023, CSDE passed a [regulation](#) that edTPA shall not be used by the state to deny issuance of an Initial Educator Certificate to a candidate who has been institutionally recommended for certification. In 2021, the state made a number of [changes to bilingual education certification requirements](#). The state has begun the process of overhauling the certification and licensure system, which is likely to take two to three years.⁵ A recent report released by the Center for Public Research and Leadership (CPRL) provides a set of recommendations to inform the update to the certification and licensure system which was informed by a set of Connecticut school districts and advisory partners. The recommendations include (Sims et al., 2023):

- Build streamlined, flexible pathways into the educator profession;
- Enable in-service educators to broaden their scope of practice to meet more students' needs;
- Hold educator preparation programs accountable for both the quality of training experiences and outcomes for candidates;
- Create improved data transparency regarding the state's distribution of educators and educator vacancies and accountability for remedying observed inequities; and
- Strengthen statewide commitments to treating educators as professionals and lifelong learners who deserve and need access to high-quality professional learning and mentorship throughout their careers.

Overview of Research on Teacher Residencies and the NCTR Model

[NCTR's teacher residency model](#) is designed to prepare effective, diverse teachers who stay in the classroom and research supports that teacher residencies are a solution to both recruiting and retaining teachers of color and preparing effective teachers in high-needs subjects and high-needs schools (Carver-Thomas, 2018). In the 2022-2023 academic year, NCTR's Network members' programs enrolled an average of 69% of teacher residents of color, and had an average three-year retention rate of 86% (National Center for Teacher Residencies, 2023). Also, 92% of principals who hosted teacher residents in their school report that they are more effective than the typical first-year teacher (National Center for Teacher Residencies, 2023).

⁵ Interview with state administrator.

External research on NCTR partner programs further supports the powerful and growing impact of the teacher residency model. This research finds that teacher residency program graduates are more likely to:

- Come from diverse backgrounds;
- Teach in shortage subject areas;
- Remain in the classroom; and
- Earn high principal satisfaction ratings compared to teachers prepared through other kinds of programs (LiBetti & Trinidad, 2018).

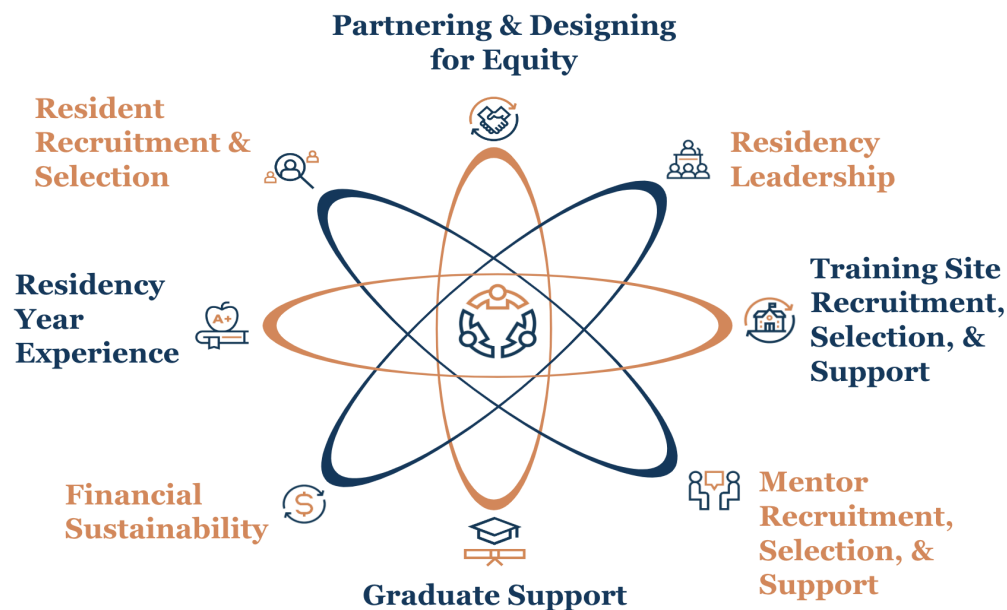
Research on the [Memphis Teacher Residency](#) (MTR) (MTR is also in NCTR's Network), found that MTR-trained teachers had higher gains in student achievement than other teachers (Tennessee State Board of Education, 2019). Additionally, MTR-trained teachers in their first three years of teaching were significantly more effective than other teachers on four different measures of teaching effectiveness: student growth on achievement tests, observation of practice, professionalism, and student perceptions (Tennessee State Board of Education, 2019). In their last two most recent evaluations, MTR was one of only three teacher preparation programs in Tennessee (out of 39 total programs), to earn the "Exceeds Expectations" performance level in all four evaluation areas (Tennessee State Board of Education, 2019). The MTR graduates were reported to outperform other graduates across the state, achieving the highest rating on the Tennessee Teacher Preparation Report Card in every category (Tennessee State Board of Education, 2019).

Similarly, in an evaluation on the effectiveness of the Urban Teacher Residency at New Visions for Public Schools in New York City, researchers found that the teacher residency program is producing highly effective and diverse new teachers who are staying in their classrooms longer and accelerating achievement among their students (Rockman et al., 2018). Overall, 59% of New Vision's current cohort of residents were teachers of color, compared to 42% across the district (New York State Education Department, 2019). The achievement of students taught by graduates of New York City's New Visions–Hunter College teacher residency was also significantly higher compared to students of peers whose preparation followed other pathways (New York State Education Department, 2019). Graduates also affected the production of stronger student gains over time, such that the impact of graduates on student achievement was largest among students taught by more veteran teachers (New York State Education Department, 2019). Furthermore, attendance rates and credits earned were higher among students of these graduates compared to students of other novice teachers, including among Black, Latinx, and Hispanic students (New York State Education Department, 2019). Finally, across six cohorts, 91% of these graduates stayed in the classroom with graduates of the program

leaving the profession at half the rate of other new NYC Department of Education high school teachers (Rockman et al., 2018).

NCTR's [Levers for Equitable Teacher Residencies](#) are used as the theoretical basis for understanding the impact of CT-TRP and the potential for teacher residency programs more broadly. NCTR's *Levers for Equitable Teacher Residencies* detail the research-based and equity-aligned features of an effective teacher residency. Figure 1 illustrates the eight levers.

Figure 1. NCTR's *Levers for Equitable Teacher Residencies*



Source: [National Center for Teacher Residencies' Levers for Equitable Teacher Residencies](#)

NCTR has revised its standards since the organization began in 2007 to reflect the knowledge gained through working with dozens of high-performing residency programs and in response to a growing body of research and evidence of effective practices identified from recruiting, preparing, and retaining highly effective, diverse, day-one ready teachers. At its core, the essential tenets of an effective teacher residency are focused on a more equitable, student and community-focused process for partnering, naming key stakeholders, and supporting the effective preparation and retention of teachers. More specifically, these are an extended, year-long clinical placement in classrooms; an effective program leader; a tightly integrated practice-based curriculum with culturally and linguistically sustained practices prioritized; and, careful recruitment and selection of teacher residents, co-teachers, and the schools in which they learn to

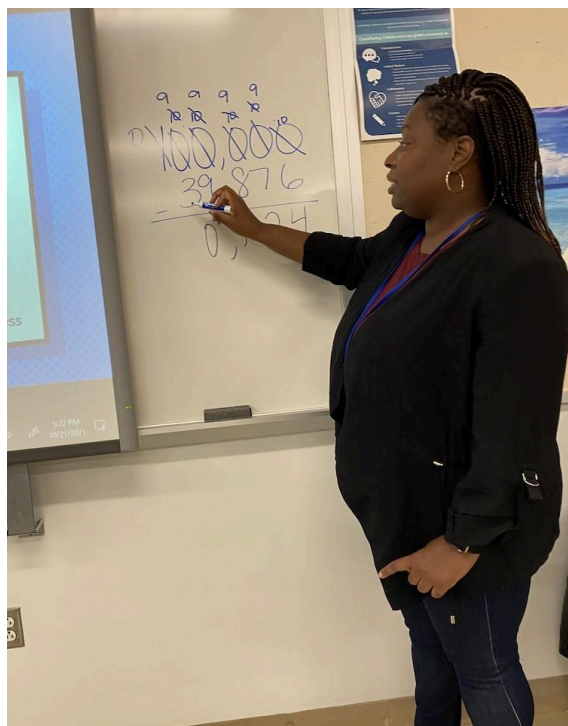
teach with an explicit focus on reducing barriers to participation for candidates of color to participate. The *Levers for Equitable Teacher Residencies* anchor NCTR's consulting that results in the design of teacher residency programs; develops teacher residency partner readiness, and maximizes the impact of existing teacher residencies in NCTR's Network, in which CT-TRP has continuously participated since 2020.

The research base indicates that clinically-based teacher preparation models such as teacher residencies more effectively recruit, prepare, and retain teachers, particularly teachers from historically marginalized backgrounds (Bohra-Mishra et al, n.d.; Boyd et al., 2008; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Dunst, 2020; Edward-Groves, 2014; Goldhaber et al., 2016; Hammerness et al., 2005; McDonald et al., 2013). Accordingly, this evaluation will explore the effectiveness of teacher residents and graduates, particularly compared to other novice teachers. In the teacher residency model, principal perception of teacher resident preparedness is considered to be a critical outcome, given that teacher residents are intended to be hired in these or similar schools, and the teacher residency is designed to meet community needs, including those of the hosting school.

Additionally, research has shown that effective partnerships among the school district, IHE, and other community partners improve the preparation of teachers and positively impact school culture (Education First, 2016; Meyers & Leaster, 2013; Richmond, 2017; Rubenstein, 2016; Zeichner et al., 2015). A corollary of this partnership—that the teacher residency is intended to serve the entire community—is that the teacher residency will benefit the school and impact student achievement. Mentor teachers and principals receive ongoing, regular professional development which builds the professional capacity of others throughout the building. In addition, teacher residents learn new skills in their coursework and through their cohort, which can then benefit the mentor and any professional learning communities in which teacher residents participate, such as grade-level meetings.

Finally, research has indicated that teacher residencies diversify the teaching field and recruit and graduate teachers from historically marginalized communities (Bireda & Cahit, 2011; Carver-Thomas, 2018; Gist et al., 2021; Libetti & Trinidad, 2018; Partelow et al., 2017; Rockman et al., 2018). This evaluation was designed to also explore the extent to which CT-TRP has recruited, prepared, and retained a diverse teaching workforce, particularly when compared with the existing state workforce as well as the student population. Exploring the diversity of CT-TRP teacher residents and graduates is critical to understanding the degree to which they reflect the student population, with the potential to confer additional benefits on these students.

Research Questions and Methods



Regine Thadel is a teacher resident at the Connecticut Teacher Residency Program. This photo was taken at Ox Ridge Elementary School in Darien, Conn.

This evaluation is intended to examine the extent to which CT-TRP is achieving its mission to recruit, prepare, and retain teachers of color. Additionally, the evaluation intends to examine the potential of the teacher residency model in Connecticut as a means of diversifying the teacher workforce and retaining effective teachers. A design team composed of staff from CT-TRP as well as staff from NCTR's Research and Evaluation and State and Federal Policy team collaborated to identify the purpose of the evaluation; develop the research questions; and identify an evaluation design, including identifying the data to be collected and examined. Throughout the process, NCTR staff met regularly with the CT-TRP team to provide updates on the evaluation and get feedback. Research questions for this evaluation are as follows:

- **Research Question 1: *To what extent is CT-TRP diversifying the teacher workforce in Connecticut?*** This question examines the extent to which CT-TRP is achieving its mission and diversifying the teaching field by comparing CT-TRP demographic data with demographic data from other teacher preparation pathways in CT and with the current teacher workforce and student population across the state.
- **Research Question 2: *What is the impact of CT-TRP on teachers of color and school communities?*** This question further examines the extent to which CT-TRP is achieving its mission of diversifying the teaching field and aims to support the program's continuous improvement efforts by understanding the extent to which the program values and affirms teacher residents of color; the lived experiences of teachers of color in CT-TRP; the extent to which CT-TRP eliminates barriers to entry for teachers of color; and the impact of CT-TRP on the school community.
- **Research Question 3: *How well does CT-TRP prepare teacher residents and graduates to be teachers of record?*** This research question examines the extent to which teacher residents and graduates of CT-TRP report to feel prepared to be

teachers of record as well as the extent to which mentor teachers and principals report teacher residents' preparedness, particularly compared to a typical new teacher.

- **Research Question 4: *What is the impact of CT-TRP on the retention of graduates?*** This research question aims to understand the extent to which CT-TRP graduates are retained in the teaching profession by examining the hiring and retention rate over time of program completers as well as the retention rate of program completers compared to all program completers in Connecticut and disaggregated by race.
- **Research Question 5: *How effective is the CT-TRP's mentor recruitment, selection, and preparation, and how can the program improve in this area?*** This question examines trends in the program's mentor recruitment, selection, and preparation, and how CT-TRP can improve its effectiveness in this Lever. To do this, we examine data related to the effectiveness of the mentor selection process as well as overall mentor effectiveness and mentor experiences with the program. This is an area CT-TRP is particularly interested in improving. The data generated from this evaluation are intended to inform a strategy for selecting and supporting the mentors who work with CT-TRP's teacher residents.
- **Research Question 6: *What policies and steps can CT-TRP, the state, and other institutions adopt, considering the research findings?*** This research question aims to provide takeaways and recommendations for how CT-TRP can improve, how policy can support the growth and scale of high quality teacher residencies across the state, and how the state can further reduce barriers to entering the teaching profession, particularly for teachers of color.

This evaluation applies a mixed-methods approach, using both quantitative and qualitative data to understand the impact of CT-TRP and the experiences of those participating in the program as well as consider areas for program improvement.

Quantitative data and analyses include:

- Demographic data for CT-TRP applicants, teacher residents, mentor teachers, and graduates that NCTR collects annually from teacher residency programs in the National Network, and for other teacher preparation programs and educators in Connecticut;

- Retention and hiring data for graduates of CT-TRP that NCTR collects annually from residency programs in the National Network, and for other educators in Connecticut;⁶ and
- Responses to closed-ended survey questions from residents, mentors, graduates, and hosting and hiring principals of CT-TRP and residency programs in the NCTR Network gathered via NCTR's Residency Experience Surveys.⁷ Surveys are administered from April through June across all of the teacher residency programs in NCTR's Network. Thus, the timing of data collection is similar across all Network members. The evaluation utilizes data on program constituents' perceptions and experiences of their programs, as well as residents and graduate preparedness collected across all four years of CT-TRP's existence: 2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023.

Qualitative data and analyses include:

- Eleven semi-structured focus groups and interviews of residents, mentors, graduates, and principals conducted in 2022 and 2023. Interviews and focus groups were conducted virtually using a semi-structured protocol and lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. Over the course of the interviews and focus groups, we spoke with six mentors, four graduates, five residents, and five principals.
- Seven semi-structured interviews were conducted with various local and state administrators, researchers, and policymakers familiar with CT-TRP and the teacher residency and teacher preparation context in Connecticut. Interviews were conducted virtually using a semi-structured protocol and lasted approximately 60 minutes.
- Responses to open-ended survey questions from residents, mentors, graduates, and hosting and hiring principals of CT-TRP and residency programs in the NCTR Network gathered via NCTR's Residency Experience Surveys.
- All of the qualitative data collected via focus groups and interviews were transcribed, and then coded and analyzed via [Dedoose](#). Responses to open-ended survey questions were similarly reviewed for broad, shared themes and patterns related to the overall research questions.

⁶ Hiring rate data collected by NCTR includes: number of graduates to teach in a district or charter that is a partner with the program and number of graduates hired to teach in a Title I school. Retention data collected by NCTR is a 1-, 3-, and 5-year retention rate calculated by the residency program and reported to NCTR on the annual survey. NCTR also asks for numbers of graduates who are still teaching as of the year of the survey.

⁷ Started asking in 2020 about race/ethnicity and gender.

Additionally, various publicly available documents, briefs and reports, and artifacts were examined for a comprehensive understanding of the state’s teacher residency and teacher preparation context and the implementation and impact of the CT-TRP program.

Key Findings

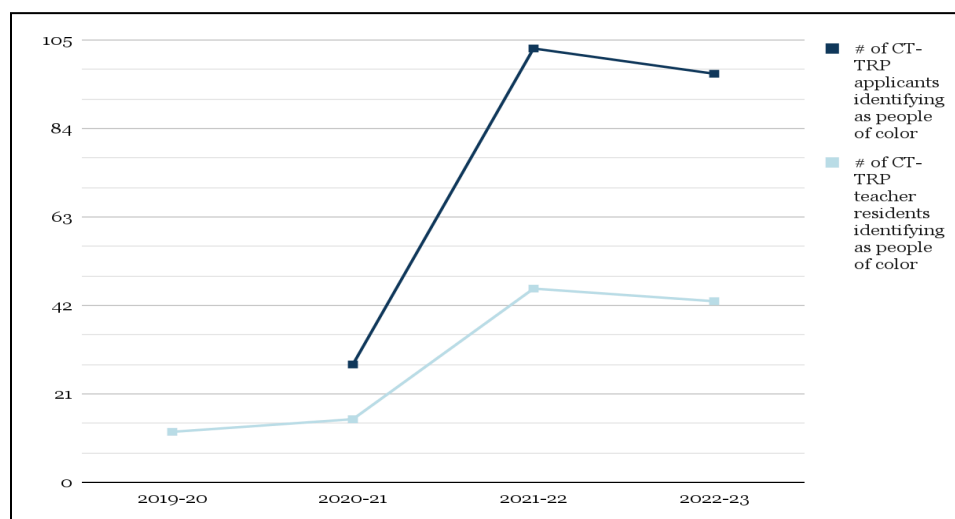
Research Question 1. *To what extent is CT-TRP diversifying the teacher workforce?*

CT-TRP is diversifying the Connecticut teacher workforce, and key constituents agree. CT-TRP predominantly enrolls people of color, while at the same time enrolling more teacher residents of color over time.

Figures 2 and 3 provide numbers and the percentages of applicants and enrolled teacher residents in CT-TRP over time. Together, the figures show that:

- Numbers of applicants and residents identifying as people of color have increased over time (15 residents in 2020-21 and 43 residents in 2022-23, for example);
- The large majority of teacher residents has identified as people of color in every year (88% in 2022-23, for example);
- The share of teacher residents identifying as people of color has remained mostly stable even as the number has increased (100% in 2020-21 and 88% in 2022-23); and 4) the program enrolls a larger share of residents of color than applicants of color (64% of applicants vs. 88% of teacher residents in 2022-23, for example).

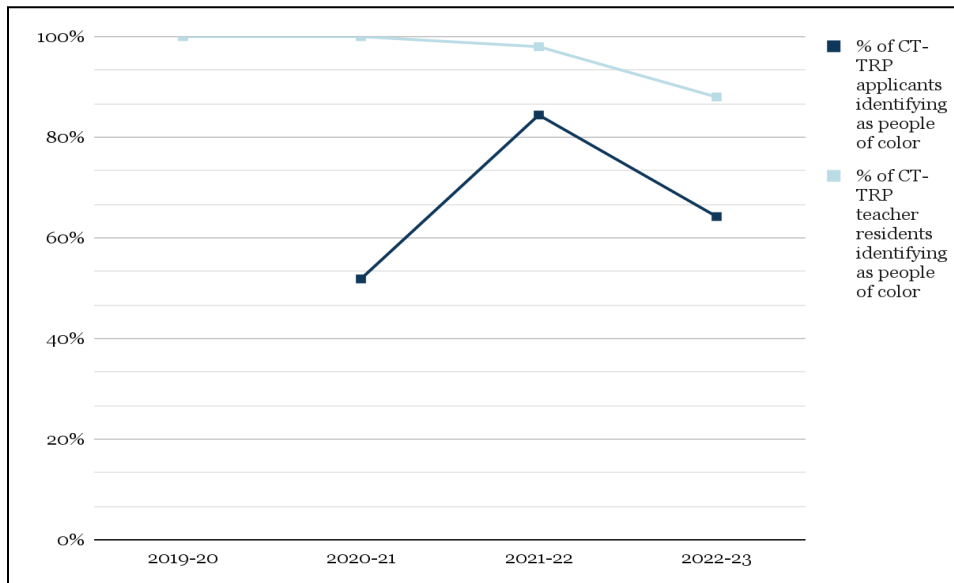
Figure 2. *Numbers of CT-TRP Applicants and Teacher Residents Identifying as People of Color, 2019-20 to 2022-23*



Source: NCTR Annual Program Data Survey for 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023.

Note: CT-TRP did not report racial and ethnic data for applicants to NCTR in 2019-20.

Figure 3. Percentages of CT-TRP Applicants and Teacher Residents Identifying as People of Color, 2019-20 to 2022-23

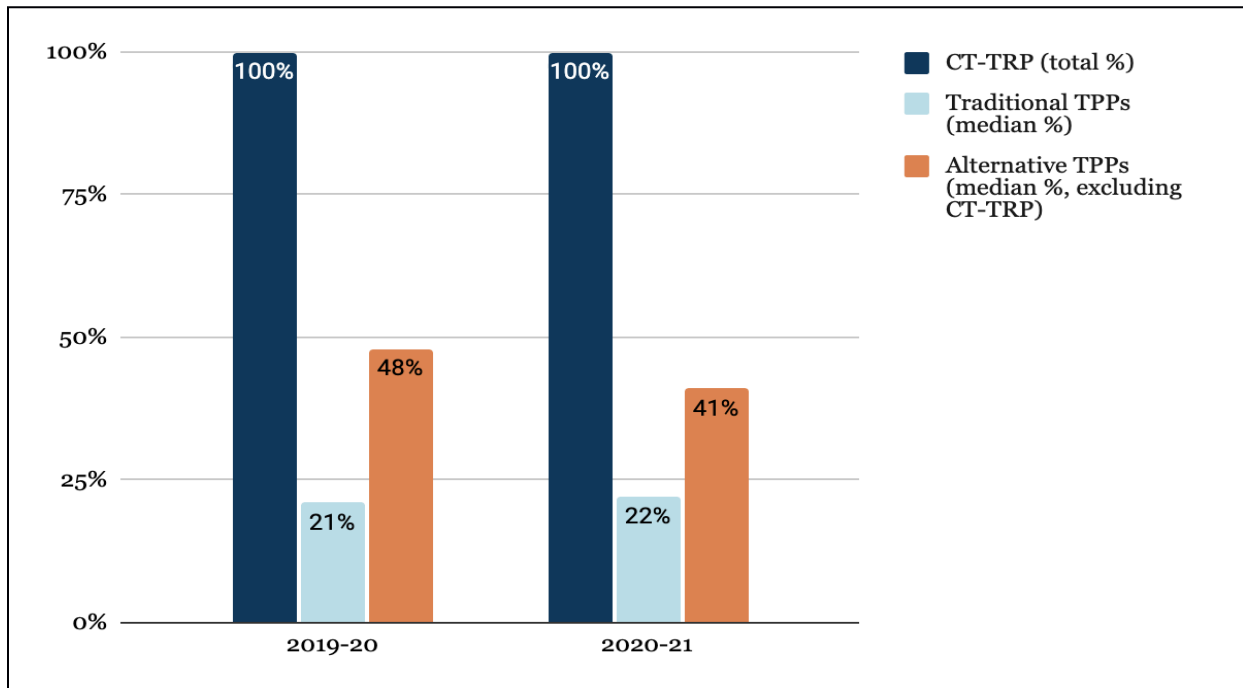


Source: NCTR Annual Program Data Survey for 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023.

Note: CT-TRP did not report racial and ethnic data for applicants to NCTR in 2019-20.

CT-TRP enrolls a larger share of people of color than do both traditional and other alternative teacher preparation programs in Connecticut and this has remained true over time. Figure 4 provides percentages of enrollees to identify as people of color at CT-TRP and other types of teacher preparation programs (TPPs) in Connecticut for 2019-20 and 2020-21. The figure shows that CT-TRP recruits and prepares a larger share of teachers of color than other preparation providers and schools in Connecticut. In both 2019-20 and 2021-22, 100% of CT-TRP teacher residents identified as people of color. Meanwhile, on average, only 21% of enrollees in traditional TPPs and 48% of enrolled in alternative TPPs (excluding CT-TRP) for 2019-20 identified as people of color. These percentages are also similar for 2020-21.

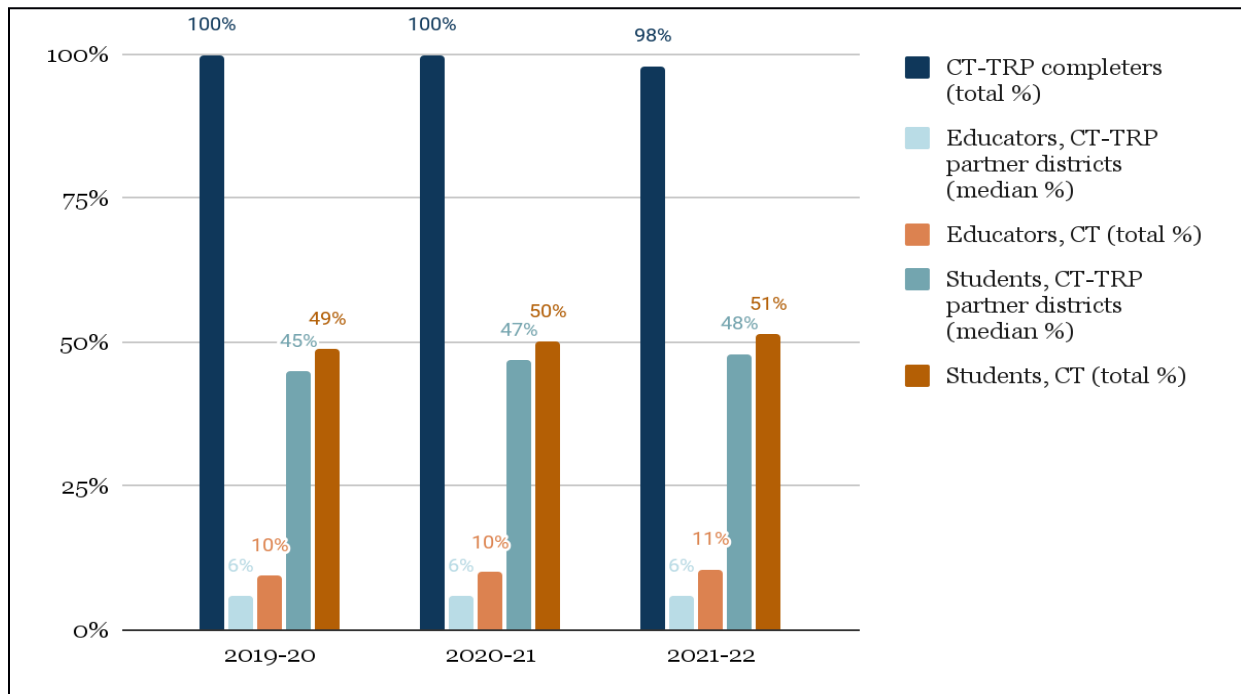
Figure 4. Percentages of Enrollees in CT-TRP and Other Teacher Preparation Programs in Connecticut Identifying as People of Color, 2019-20 to 2020-21



Sources: (1) NCTR Annual Program Data Survey for 2020 and 2021; (2) U.S. Department of Education, Higher Education Act Title II State Report Card System. Retrieved from <https://title2.ed.gov/Public/Report/StateHome.aspx>

Compared to educators in the state and in CT-TRP’s partner districts, CT-TRP prepares teachers whose racial and ethnic demographics align more closely with those of students, and this has remained true over time. Figure 5 reports percentages of CT-TRP completers, and educators and students in CT-TRP partner districts and the state of Connecticut to identify as people of color. The figure shows that CT-TRP has consistently prepared a larger share of teachers of color than the share of educators of color working in the program’s partner districts and the state of Connecticut, and that this is more in alignment with the demographics of students. In 2021-22, for example, around 50% of students in CT-TRP’s partner districts and the state as a whole identified as people of color. However, on average, just 6% of educators in CT-TRP partner districts identified as people of color and in total just 11% of all educators in Connecticut identified as such. Meanwhile, in that same year, 98% of CT-TRP completers identified as people of color.

Figure 5. Percentages of CT-TRP Completers, and Educators in CT-TRP Partner Districts and Connecticut Identifying as People of Color, 2019-20 to 2021-22

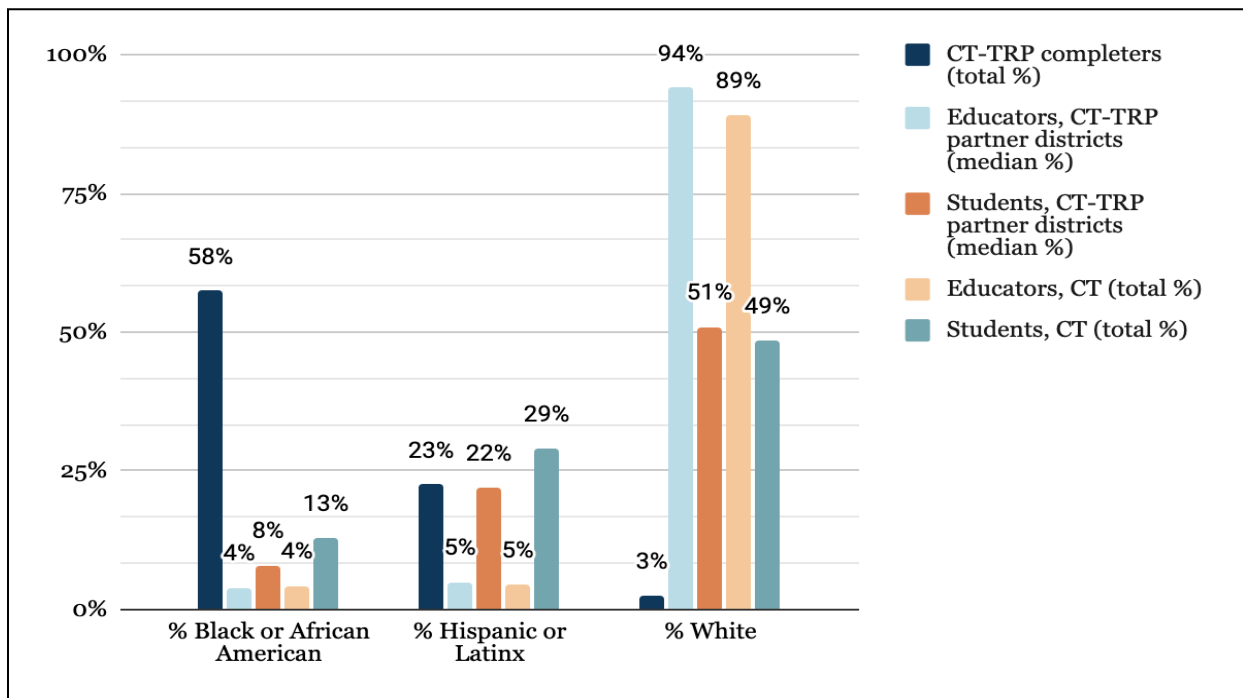


Sources: (1) NCTR Annual Program Data Survey for 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023; (2) EdSight Educator Diversity Dashboard. Connecticut State Department of Education. Retrieved from https://public-edsight.ct.gov/educators/educator-diversity-dashboard?language=en_US.

Note: Educators in CT-TRP partner districts and CT include administrators and non-certified teaching staff.

Figure 6 provides the percentage of CT-TRP completers and students in the program’s partner school districts and the state to identify with particular racial and ethnic identities for 2021-22. **Again, the figure shows that in general, as compared to educators as a whole, CT-TRP completers better reflect the particular racial and ethnic demographics of students in the program’s partner districts and the state.** On average, 22% of students enrolled in CT-TRP’s partner districts for 2021-22 identified as Hispanic or Latinx, and 8% identified as Black or African American, while just 5% of educators in these districts identified as Hispanic or Latinx and 4% identified as Black or African American. In contrast and more in line with the racial and ethnic demographics of the students, 23% of CT-TRP completers for 2021-22 identified as Hispanic or Latinx and 58% identified as Black or African American.

Figure 6. Race and Ethnicity of CT-TRP Completers, and Teachers and Students in CT-TRP Partner Districts and Connecticut, 2021-22



Sources: (1) NCTR Annual Program Data Survey 2023; (2) EdSight Educator Race/Ethnicity. Connecticut State Department of Education. Retrieved from https://public-edsight.ct.gov/Educators/Educator-Diversity-Dashboard/Educator-Race-Ethnicity?language=en_US; (3) EdSight Student Enrollment Dashboard. Connecticut State Department of Education. Retrieved from https://public-edsight.ct.gov/students/enrollment-dashboard?language=en_US.

Note: Educators in CT-TRP partner districts and CT include administrators and non-certified teaching staff.

Qualitative data suggest that constituents also agree that CT-TRP is achieving its mission and is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and that this is what also attracted them to the program. For example, one mentor reflected, “So, for me, I believe in what it stands for. I think there needs to be more teachers of color. I think that that is super important for students. I think that it should not be a predominantly female or White career path. And I think that giving opportunities to people who may not have had the opportunity to go to school or didn’t recognize the options that they might have had, I think it’s a huge door opening for them.” Another stated, “I think for me it was just working in a very diverse district. Like, seeing that our staff is not diverse, it was appealing to me to try to mentor someone that looked like my students so they could have that role model in the classroom and maybe they would want to be a teacher when they grow up.” Another mentor stated, “I think as we work to diversify our staff, it all has an impact...I do think it’s so important for kids to be able to see themselves, you know, in their teachers, and to provide them with, ‘Hey, this is a possibility for me or I can be what

I want to be regardless of who I am or what my background is, what my nationality is, I have opportunities.”

A principal echoed these sentiments, affirming the need for diverse teachers, *“When the program started it was, again, just exciting and new. We were able to kind of hand pick some mentors that we knew would be both ready for the work of adult learning and coaching, and doing that, and would be excited by the mission to welcome diverse teachers to our school community.”*

A teacher resident stated, *“...And the program really does empower people of color...I think the fact that the program spearheaded an alternative route based on giving access to people of color really puts Connecticut ahead of the game as far as having alternative routes to certification...The inner cities need to have representation. And the fact of the matter is, to be able to get a teaching certification without this opportunity is a very systemic problem. It’s a systemically racial problem where they ask for money for Master’s Degrees. For things that are obstacles that don’t provide accessible – aren’t accessible to marginalized populations.”*

Another teacher resident stated, *“While I was there I started realizing more and more that the kids who look like me or who don’t look like everyone else in town were the ones that were typically struggling with identity, self-expression, and understanding where they fit in the grand scheme of things. I was approached by the school, actually, one of the principals who I had been working with for a few years, and she had told me about this program. And while I was working with the kids that I had [in a youth program at the school], I realized how important it was for kids to see a person who looks like them or who doesn’t look like everybody else be in a position of education to inspire them to do what they want to do.”*

In summary, data collected and analyzed for this evaluation suggest that CT-TRP is achieving its mission and diversifying the teaching field, even when compared with other teacher preparation pathways in CT and with the current teacher workforce and student population across the state.

Research Question 2. What is the impact of CT-TRP on teachers of color and school communities?

Analysis for research question 2 suggests that, overall:

- CT-TRP is having a positive impact on teacher residents and mentor teachers of color, as well as on the school communities where teacher residents and graduates work;

- The holistic supports provided by the program, the communal aspect of the program, and the cohort model are especially important to teacher residents of color;
- Teacher residents' experiences are shaped by their experiences with their mentor teachers, and racial identities; teacher residents who have more positive experiences with their mentors tend to have more positive experiences of the program; and
- Financial support, and support with navigating the certification and licensure system remain essential for supporting teacher residents and graduates of color to enter and continue teaching.

Lived experiences of teachers of color in CT-TRP and the extent to which the program values and affirms residents of color

Overall, teacher residents of color reported feeling supported, and valued and affirmed by CT-TRP and these results have remained consistent over time. Teacher residents' experiences are shaped by their experiences with their mentor teachers, and racial identities; teacher residents who have more positive experiences with their mentors have more positive experiences of the program. **Teacher residents and graduates of color regularly report that holistic supports, the communal aspect of the program, and the cohort model positively impact their experiences.**

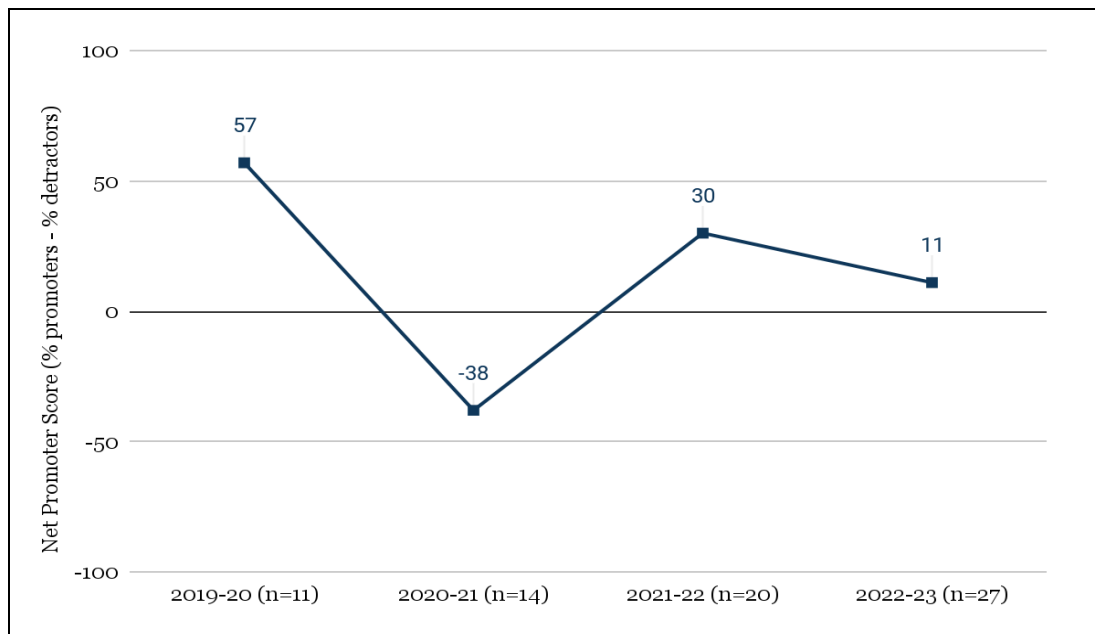
Figure 8 provides an initial glance into the experiences of teachers of color in CT-TRP with the Net Promoter Score (NPS), which is a measure used across various industries to gauge customer experience and loyalty. In this case, teacher residents are asked to respond to the question, "How likely are you to recommend your program to a friend or colleague looking to become a teacher?" on a zero (0) - to 10 scale, with zero being "Not at all likely" and 10 being "Extremely likely".



Lisa Taft (left) is a mentor and Danecheka Franck (right) is a teacher resident at the Connecticut Teacher Residency Program. This photo was taken at Hop Brook Elementary School in Naugatuck, Conn.

Those who select 9 or 10 (i.e., very likely recommend the program) are considered ‘promoters,’ those who select 7 or 8 are considered ‘passive’ (i.e., neither likely nor unlikely to recommend the program), and those who select 6 or below are considered ‘detractors’ (i.e., unlikely to recommend the program). The NPS is calculated by subtracting the percentage of detractors from the percentage of promoters, and can range from -100 to +100, with higher scores representing higher satisfaction and greater likelihood that more individuals promote and recommend the program. Results show that the NPS for teachers of color has been positive every year, except for 2020-21 which may have been due to COVID, and is slightly lower for 21-22 and 22-23 than for 19-20.

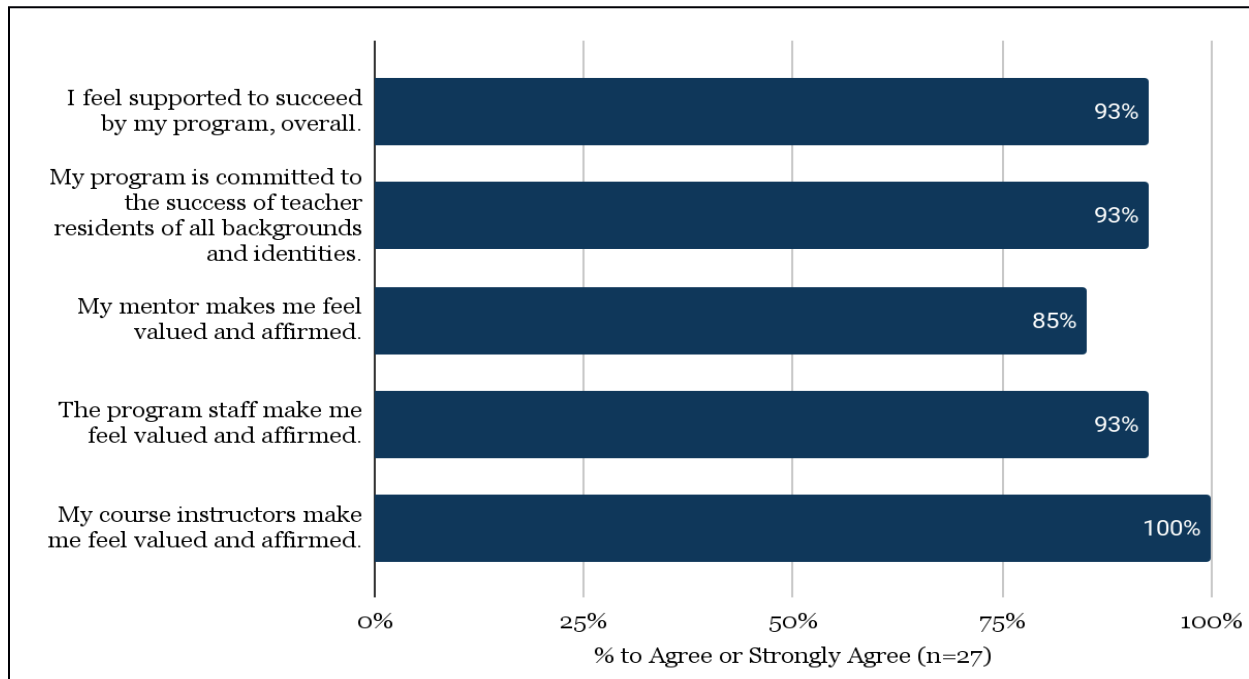
Figure 8. Net Promoter Score among CT-TRP Teacher Residents of Color, 2019-20 to 2022-23



Source: NCTR Residency Experience Surveys, 2023

Figure 9 provides the percentage of teacher residents of color in CT-TRP for 2022-23 to agree or strongly agree with different statements about feeling supported, or valued and affirmed by the program. As shown in the figure, a large majority of teacher residents of color for 2022-23—85% or more—reported feeling supported to succeed by the program overall, as well as feeling valued and affirmed by specific groups of people, including program staff, mentor teachers, and course instructors. In addition, 93% agreed that the program is committed to the success of teacher residents of all backgrounds and identities.

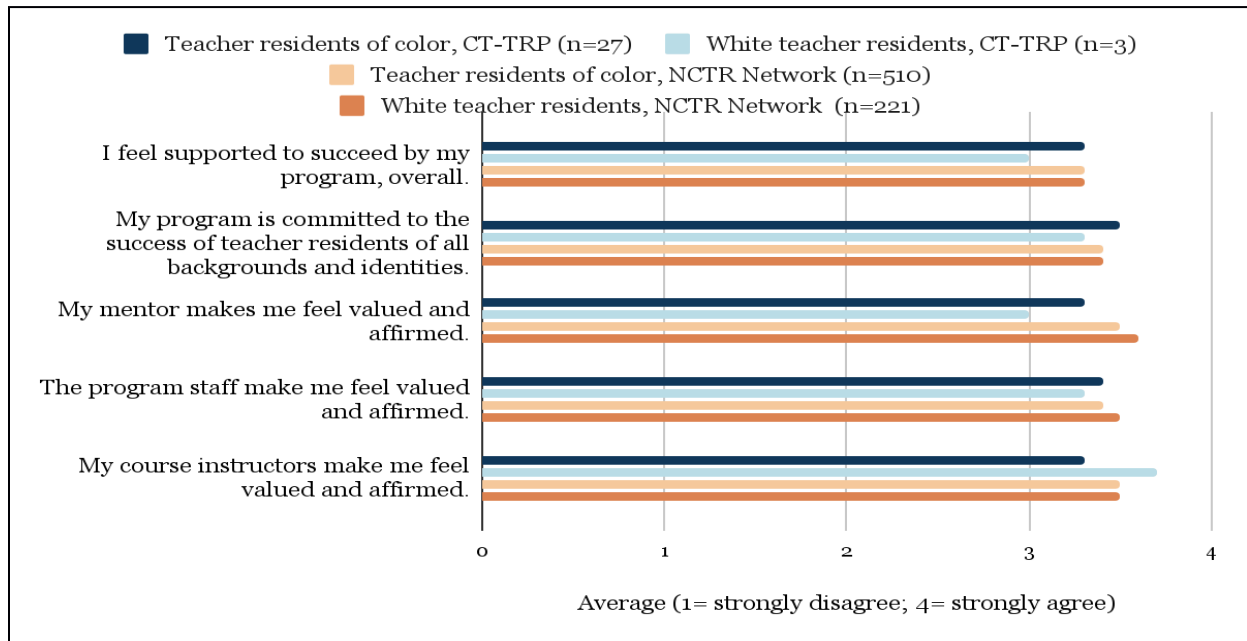
Figure 9. Percentage of Teacher Residents of Color in CT-TRP to Agree with Different Statements about Program Support, 2022-23



Source: NCTR Residency Experience Surveys, 2023

Figure 10 compares the average responses for the same items among teacher residents of color in CT-TRP to white teacher residents in CT-TRP, teacher residents of color in other programs across the NCTR Network, and white teacher residents in other programs across the NCTR Network for 2022-23. As shown in the figure, in general, teacher residents of color in CT-TRP for 2022-23 felt as supported as other teacher residents. Nevertheless, the average level of agreement to feeling valued and affirmed by course instructors and mentors is slightly lower among CT-TRP’s residents of color (average response for course instructor item = 3.3 vs. ≥ 3.5 for all other groups; average response for mentor item = 3.3 vs. 3.0 for white teacher residents in CT-TRP and ≥ 3.5 for teacher residents in other NCTR Network programs).

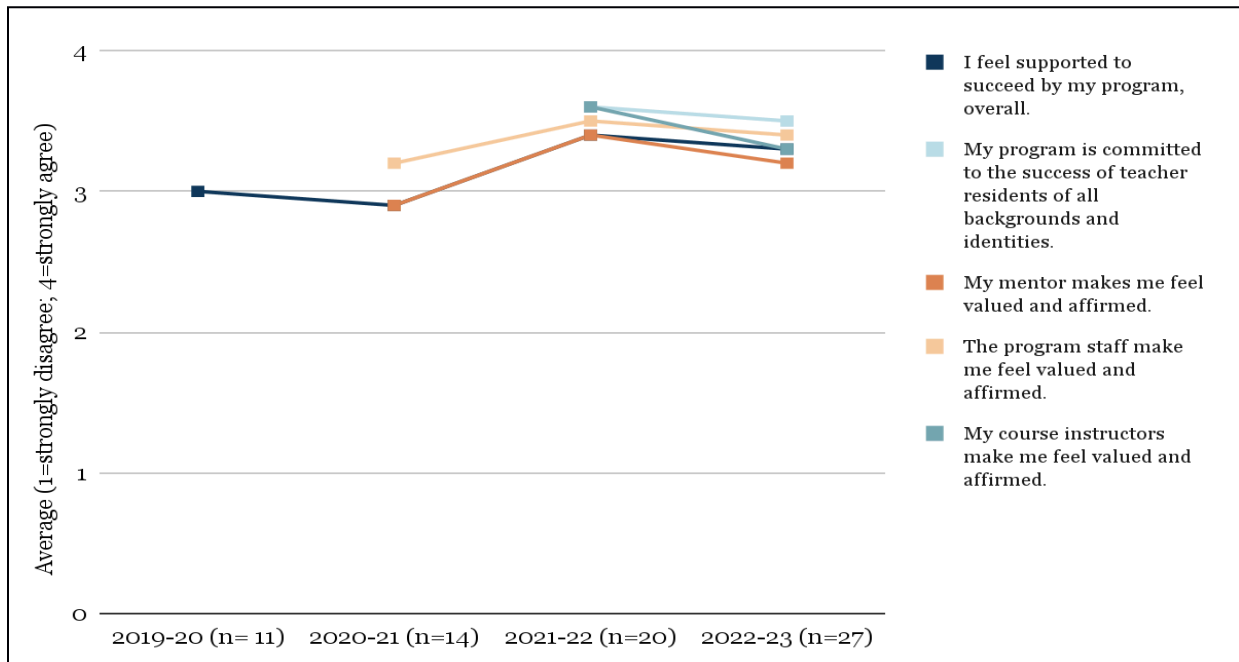
Figure 10. Average Responses to NCTR Residency Experience Survey Items among Teacher Residents of Color and White Residents in CT-TRP, and across NCTR Network, 2022-23



Source: NCTR Residency Experience Surveys, 2023

Figure 11 provides average responses to the same items among teacher residents of color in CT-TRP for the most recent and previous years. On average, teacher residents across all years have felt mostly supported by CT-TRP, with the most recent residents feeling slightly more supported than those of previous years. For example, average agreement to the item “My mentor makes me feel valued and affirmed” very slightly increased from 2020-21 to 2022-23 (2.9 vs. 3.2). The average response for the statement “Program staff make me feel valued and affirmed” similarly increased (3.2 in 2021-22 to 3.4 in 2022-23).

Figure 11. Average Responses to NCTR Residency Experience Survey Items among Teacher Residents of Color in CT-TRP, 2019-20 to 2022-23



Sources: NCTR Residency Experience Surveys 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023

Note: Data are not displayed if an item was not asked in a given year.

Qualitative data from the interviews and focus groups further illuminates the lived experiences of teachers of color in CT-TRP and the extent to which the program values and affirms residents of color. **For example, teacher residents and graduates noted that holistic support helped them successfully complete the program.** Several Black residents and graduates stated the following:

- *“I feel like it’s helpful in more ways than just one, you know? Not just financial, but the mentor that you have, the coach, you have a good coach, that’s great. And the fact that they allow you, it’s not like pass or fail, they give you time.”*
- *“The residency program has supported and prepared me well for my role as a teacher through constant observations and feedback with reflection. I have been provided several resources to help me navigate not only curriculum wise but socially and emotionally through my first years teaching. I have been provided a safe place to learn and speak through the affinity groups with my cohort and others who have graduated the program.”*
- *“[A program director] was a wealth of knowledge who showed her support, care, and desire to see us succeed throughout the program.”*

- *“They provide emotional support that I needed to complete the program successfully. They answered all of my questions and provided feedback for improvement which will contribute to the successful completion of the program.”*

Additionally, another Black teacher resident acknowledged the communal aspect of the residency and its impact on their experience, *“I think the biggest part for me is being surrounded by people who are actually passionate about doing something that will help so many kids, very important. Because it’s been before where literally everything that the program does, it just opens your eyes to such a better potential future. And even all of the instructors that they put in front of us, every single one of them is their forefront, the thing that they want to get across. And it is their thing regardless of what background that they have, what race they happen to be, they are on the same side as the program. So, their hiring expertise [is] fantastic.”*

The cohort model also appears to be an important part of the residency and graduate experience. One graduate reflected, *“Because to me, their [her cohort’s] triumph was my triumph. And my cohort started trusting me, they started to love me, and I helped them. We navigated through it and we made it. We have all had successful years and they know that. They said, ‘One thing we know about you is if we need help you’re gonna – we can call you, you’re [going to] show up’. And knowing that, she goes, ‘That’s everything to us’.”*

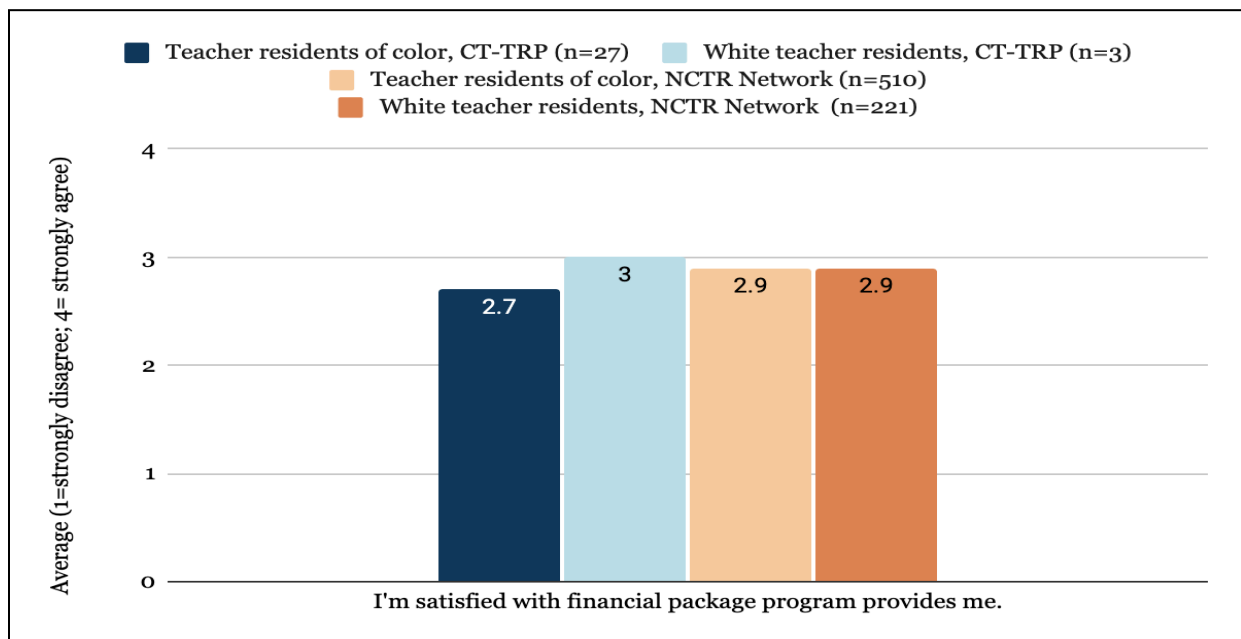
Extent to which CT-TRP eliminates barriers for teachers of color

Continuing to strengthen financial support for teacher residents of color remains essential for their ability to participate in and complete CT-TRP to become teachers of record. Indeed, research shows that cost is currently a barrier to teacher preparation because of the tuition, exams, and licensure fees. Teacher candidates are also typically required to complete a clinical experience for which they are not compensated (Rowland et al., 2023). Furthermore, the high cost of teacher preparation poses a disproportionately higher burden on teachers of color (Flannery, 2021; Miller, 2017; Allegretto, 2022; Fiddiman et al., 2019). **In addition to strengthening financial support, navigating the state’s certification and licensure system regularly surfaced as a challenge for CT-TRP teacher residency candidates.**

Data from NCTR’s 2022-23 resident survey suggest that the program has helped to eliminate financial barriers that systematically challenge people of color from becoming teachers, but also that more could be done. Indeed, a majority of teacher residents of color for 2022-23 – 59% – agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the financial package the program provided them. Nevertheless, Figure

12—which compares the average agreement to being satisfied with their financial package among teacher residents of color in CT-TRP to white residents in CT-TRP, teacher residents of color in other programs across the NCTR Network, and white residents in other programs across the NCTR Network for 2022-23—shows that average agreement is slightly lower among CT-TRP’s residents of color than among other residents (average response = 2.7 vs. 3.0 for white residents in CT-TRP and 2.9 for residents in other NCTR Network programs).

Figure 12. Average Responses to Being Satisfied with Program’s Financial Package among Teacher Residents of Color and White Residents in CT-TRP, and across NCTR Network, 2022-23



Source: NCTR Residency Experience Surveys, 2023

Qualitative data further reveal that principals and residents acknowledged that the program lowered barriers to entry for teacher candidates of color, and Black teacher residents universally said that they would not be able to start or complete the program without the financial support of the program. For example, one Black teacher resident stated, *“When I really decided I wanted to become a teacher, I was a paraprofessional and I felt I didn’t have a lot of voice in the school as being a para. I always felt under-rated. But the challenge at that time was I was a little bit older, I had children, and financially I couldn’t afford it. So, I found out about this program. The ‘financial’ piece was the biggest piece. And the way they had it set up so that I could work and learn at the same time was, I would say, what drew me in the most.”*

Another shared, *“My mom heard of this program on the radio or something, and she told me about it, and it was just the perfect situation. And I never thought I, even though I was homeschooling, I never thought I’d want to be a teacher... For me it was seamless because it just all fell into place so there were no challenges. But if I had to do it on my own and go back to school, obviously as a single parent and pay tuition and not work in the situation I was in, I wouldn’t have been able to do it. So, I’m very thankful.”*

Another graduate shared, *“My school and district told me about the program, and I entered into the program. I’m truly grateful. During my Master’s, I was gonna do student teaching. As you know, graduate school is expensive. I decided to opt for this alternate new program because I was being paid while in the residency and also get my license. Since I already had my degree I thought it was a perfect idea to do.”*

One district administrator stated, *“We have so many phenomenal paras and folks like that who were rock stars and hard workers but for various life reasons, couldn’t get to full time teaching. Remove barriers. That’s the idea. I struggle to remove some of these barriers because they’re above me. They say, “I can’t not work and spend time to get certified”. They also need the benefits. They can’t afford to just not have benefits or move toward Cobra and spend a bunch of money. Their stories are touching. They interact with children the way I want my own kids interacted with. How do we get them to get that piece of paper? The only thing getting in their way is that they don’t have the ability to go do that. When I heard about this program, I knew it aligned. It’s been exactly what we thought it was going to be.”*

Teacher residents, including Black teacher residents involved with BEI, nevertheless also suggested increasing the stipend as a way to reduce barriers that keep historically marginalized communities from being able to enter and remain in the profession. One Black teacher resident stated, *“I am grateful to have been given the opportunity to be a part of this great program. I would suggest that the stipend be increased if possible. However, the way that this program is designed, it definitely allowed me to complete the program.”* Another graduate stated, *“I was going to say for recruitment purposes, I know we are paid, but it would benefit to be paid more. I know some of us can’t. Like, I support myself and it was hard. Like, I took a pay cut to join this program. Like a deep pay cut. And I had before, like this is why I’m so organized. I need to know exactly what to expect. And I do know that some people could only get through it because they had a significant other. And all who was able to compensate for that, but not everyone has that. And so, if we could figure out a way to enhance the pay for every potential recruit, I feel like that is one of the pressures that could be taken off of the pay.”*

Qualitative data from teacher residents, principals, and district and state administrators also suggest that the state’s certification and licensure exams pose a challenge for teacher candidates. Respondents noted that there are too many tests (e.g., elementary education candidates have to take and pass six assessments), that the tests seem disconnected from the practice of teaching, that preparing for the tests is stressful and time intensive, and that the tests can be expensive. Several respondents commented on edTPA specifically as a challenge. One principal stated, *“That’s the part where it’s like, not that [resident name] struggled to pass it, but the stress around that. It just feels out of your control and it’s disconnected from the coursework [...] For some people, they had to take a Foundations of Reading test, or they’ve got to do a Praxis I if they didn’t have the SAT scores prior. Like, that stuff if I had a magic wand and could say, ‘Hey, how could you help residents, particularly those you’ve described who might have more challenges in their personal life that would be limiting them from fully participating? To be able to do it, you give them a little bit more time to pass those tests. Or just have fewer tests.”*

One Black teacher resident said, *“The program was very intense with so much classwork; studying for tests and do edTPA all at once, was very overwhelming making most or all of the residents feel burdened or worn out, exhausted.”*

Impact of CT-TRP on the school community



Ayşe Yukselten is a teacher resident at the Connecticut Teacher Residency Program. This photo was taken at Broad Brook Elementary School in East Windsor, Conn.

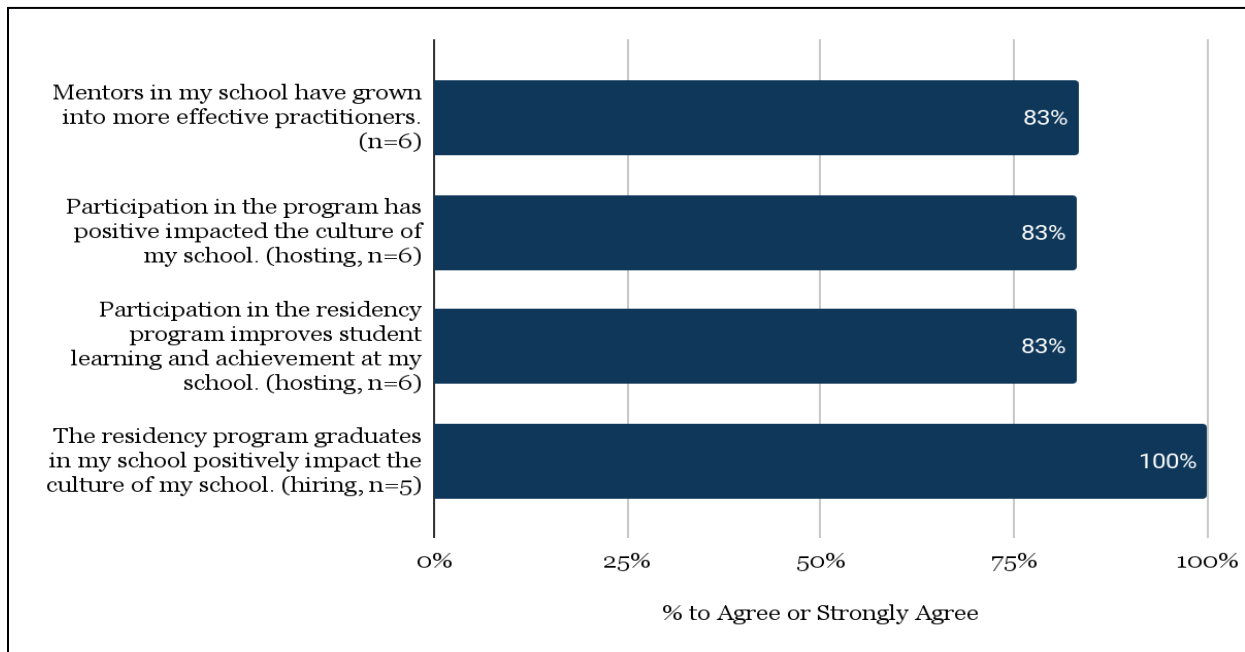
Overall, principals report CT-TRP has had a positive impact on their school communities and student learning, and that the teachers mentoring residents in their schools have grown into more effective practitioners.

Mentor teachers of color report to feel more confident in their teaching and teacher leadership abilities as a result of being mentors, and more so over time.

Figure 13 provides the percentage of principals to host CT-TRP residents for 2022-23 to agree or strongly agree with different statements about the impact of the program on their schools and Figure 14 provides average responses to the same items among principals for the most recent and previous years. **As shown in Figure 13, a**

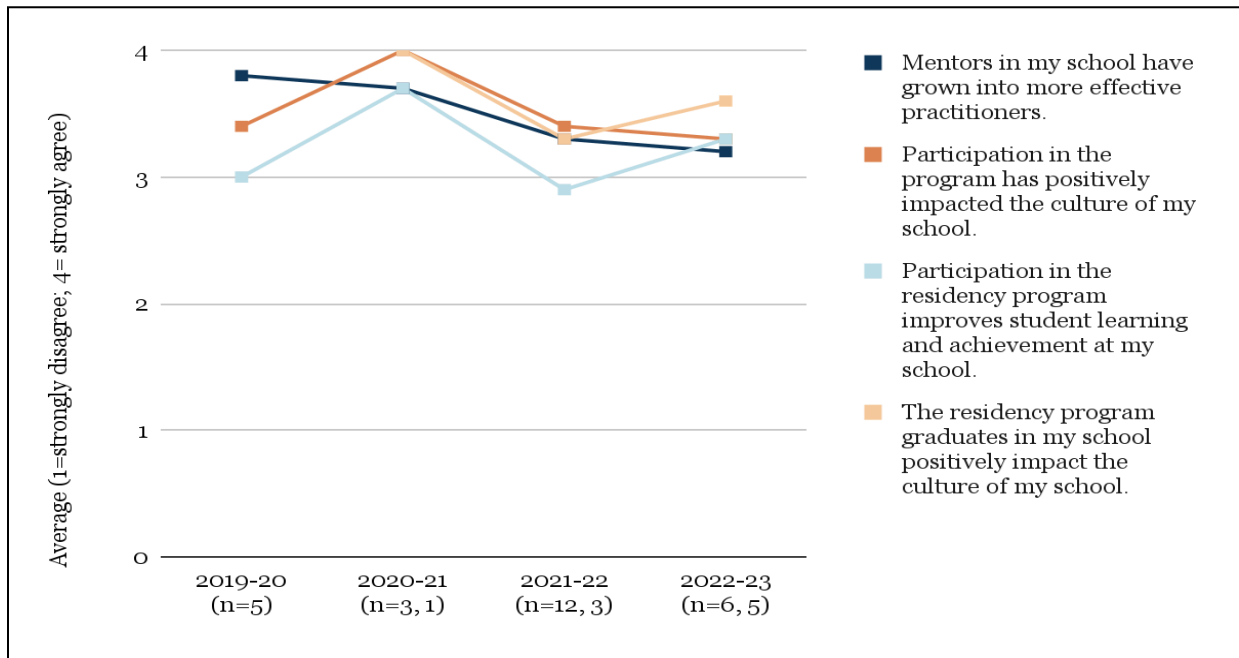
majority of principals—**83% or more**—reported that participation in the program has positively impacted student achievement and culture at their schools and that by participating in the program, mentors in their schools have grown into more effective practitioners. Figure 14 shows that these results are steady over a three-year period. Average levels of agreement among principals to statements about the program’s positive impact on the culture and student achievement at their schools have generally ranged from 3.4 to 4. Notably, average agreement about the program’s impact on student achievement has been slightly lower than the program’s impact on school culture (e.g., in 2019-2020, average agreement about impact on student achievement =3.0 vs. 3.4 average agreement about impact on school culture), and agreement for this item has varied somewhat more over time (e.g., average in 2020-21 = 3.7 vs. 2.9 in 2021-22). In addition, responses from principals about the impact of the program on their mentor teachers growing into more effective practitioners has slightly decreased steadily from 2019-2020 (3.8) to 2022-2023 (3.2).

Figure 13. *Percentage of Principals Hosting Residents and/or Hiring Graduates of CT-TRP to Agree with Different Statements about Impact of Program on School Community, 2022-23*



Source: NCTR Residency Experience Surveys, 2023

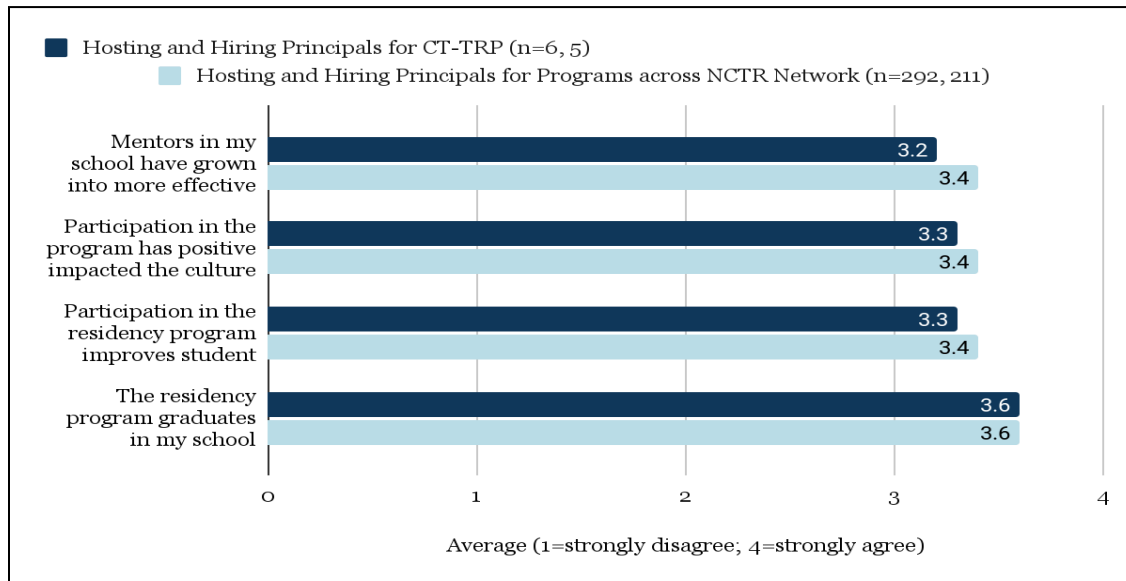
Figure 14. Average Responses to NCTR Residency Experience Survey Items among Principals Hosting Residents or Hiring Graduates for CT-TRP, 2019-20 to 2022-23



Sources: NCTR Residency Experience Surveys 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023

Figure 15 compares the average responses for the same items among principals who hosted residents for CT-TRP in 2022-23 to principals who hosted residents for other programs across the NCTR Network. As shown in the figure, principals working with CT-TRP and other programs across the NCTR Network reported similar levels of agreement with statements about the program positively impacting student achievement and culture at their schools as well as mentors in the school growing into more effective practitioners as a result of participating in the program. For example, the average agreement that participating in the program positively impacts school culture is 3.3 for CT-TRP principals and 3.4 for other principals.

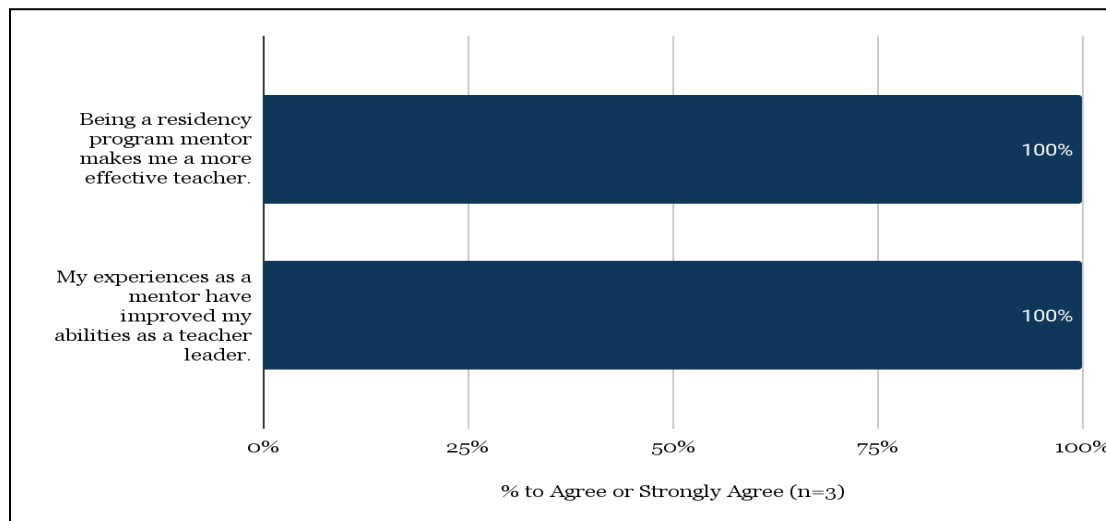
Figure 15. Average Responses to NCTR Residency Experience Survey Items among Principals Hosting Teacher Residents or Hiring Graduates for CT-TRP, and across NCTR Network, 2022-23



Source: NCTR Residency Experience Surveys, 2023

Figure 16 provides the percentage of mentor teachers of color for CT-TRP in 2022-23 to agree or strongly agree with different statements about the impact of the program on their teaching and teacher leadership abilities. **As shown in the figure, 100% of mentor teachers of color for the program reported that being a residency mentor makes them a more effective teacher, and has improved their abilities as a teacher leader.**

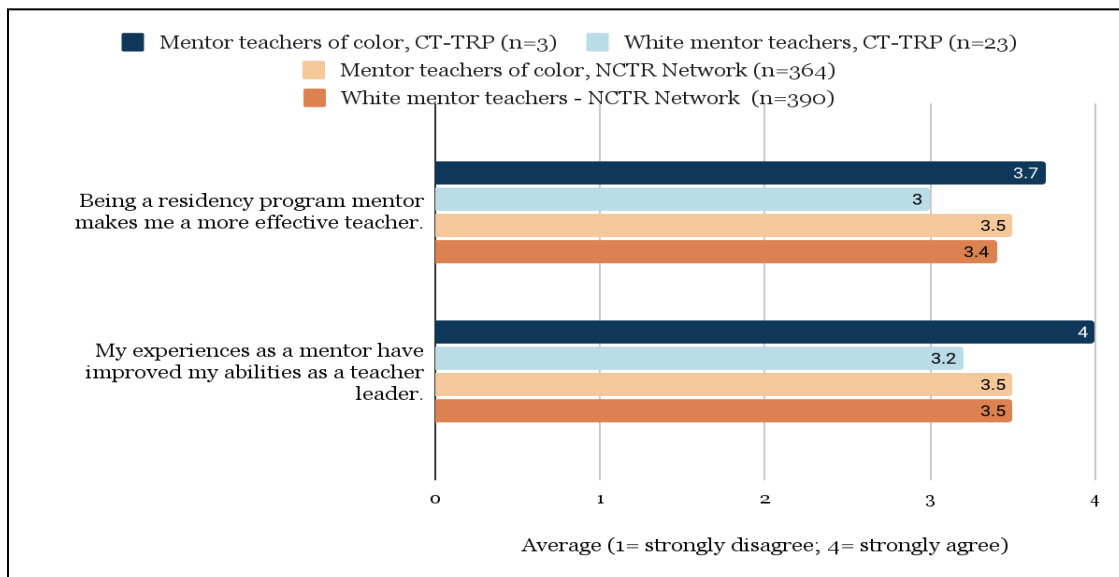
Figure 16. Percentage of Mentor Teachers of Color for CT-TRP to Agree with Different Statements about Personal Impact of Mentoring for Program, 2022-23



Source: NCTR Residency Experience Surveys, 2023

Figure 17 compares the average responses for the same items among mentor teachers of color for CT-TRP to white mentor teachers for CT-TRP, mentor teachers of color for other programs across the NCTR Network, and white mentor teachers for other programs across the NCTR Network in 2022-23. Mentor teachers of color for CT-TRP were more likely to agree with both statements than other mentor teachers (average responses = 3.7 and 4.0 vs. ≤ 3.5 for other mentors).

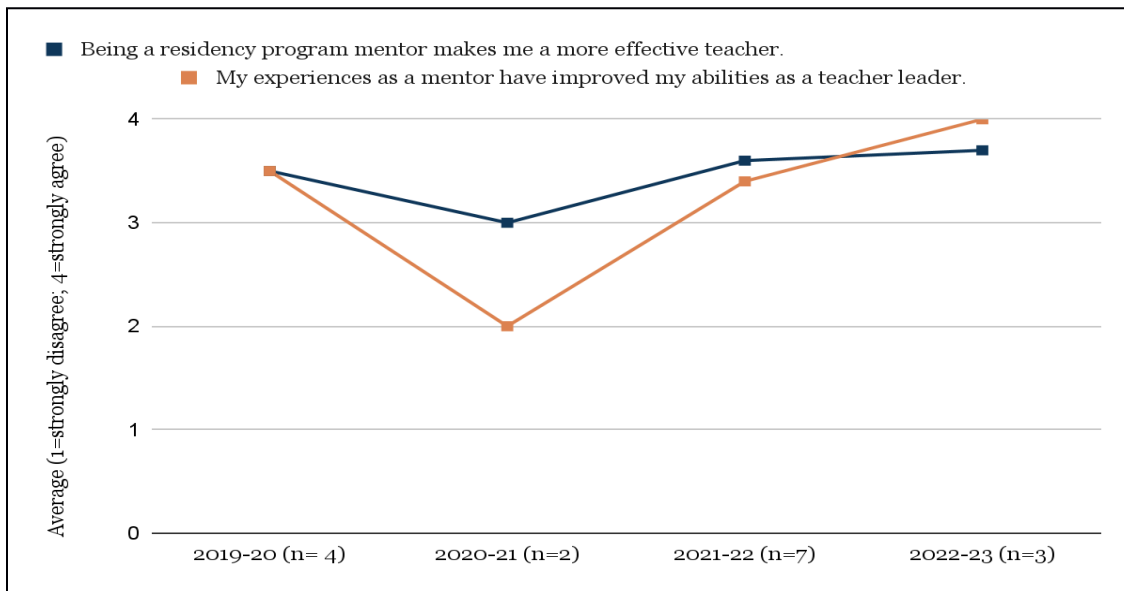
Figure 17. Average Responses to NCTR Residency Experience Survey Items among Mentor Teachers of Color and White Mentor Teachers for CT-TRP, and across NCTR Network, 2022-23



Source: NCTR Residency Experience Surveys, 2023

Figure 18 provides average agreement to the same items among mentor teachers of color for CT-TRP in the most recent and previous years. On average, mentor teachers of color across all years have felt like CT-TRP makes them a more effective teacher and improves their abilities as a teacher leader, with the most recent mentors of color feeling slightly more so than those of previous years; the average agreement to both items was higher in 2022-23 than in all previous years.

Figure 18. Average Responses to NCTR Residency Experience Survey Items among Mentors Teachers of Color for CT-TRP, 2019-20 to 2022-23



Sources: NCTR Residency Experience Surveys 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023

Qualitative data reinforce the findings about the impact of the CT-TRP program on the school community. **In interviews, principals credited the program with recruiting diverse candidates and noted the impact it had on their students and families, especially those from historically marginalized backgrounds.** When asked about the benefits of the program, a hosting and hiring principal stated, *“And I believe it’s really been good for our students. I have a very diverse population in my school, and I’ve always had a small – we’ve had some diversity in our teachers, but certainly not equal to the diversity amongst our students [before the program]. And I can see the students and the parents responding that I feel they’re knowing that [the resident] is a person who looks like me.”*

Another principal emphasized the impact of the graduate they hired on her students and families, *“So, the [graduate] that I have that I hired, she’s phenomenal. She’s Spanish speaking. She’s engrossed herself into the culture of the school. She’s a very good communicator with the parents when something happens right away and not waiting. And parents respect that. And she’s willing to step outside and take on other responsibilities...And you know, she wants to make sure that the culture and climate of the school is good and inclusive of everyone.”*

Principals raved about how the graduates impact the entire school community, *“She did an exceptional job. She was in fourth grade. She did her program, and then the teacher residence, and then we hired her as a fourth grade teacher. She finished her last year*

this last year. Parents lined up to the door, ‘She was transformative for my child, she was just what they needed’. [...] She as a person has made a big cultural impact in terms of her warmth, her care, her way of engaging with students.”

Principals also recognized the impact on other teachers within the school, “Our school community has grown as a positive and supportive place to help adult learning flourish. Teachers have wrapped around the resident teacher(s) to provide coaching, guidance and just a shoulder to lean on in the crucial first years of developing a teaching practice.”

Another principal stated, “I think the mentorship and the coursework were really critical and I think then trying to encourage the schools who are receiving and welcoming residents to provide wrap around support is also just a great expectation to set. That was not just about putting people in and off you go and good luck. It’s really around being mind – particularly if you’re the culture and the character of the school, which I would imagine that most – many schools are because they’re wanting to engage in welcoming more diverse faculty to their buildings. They have to do a really good job of examining their own kind of blind spots, and how might this feel for somebody who’s not from that neck of the woods or from that area. So, I think that cultural expectation that was described both to mentors through principals is sort of infused throughout the Connecticut Teacher Residency model. I think that was a very healthy and important cultural kind of stew to put this all in.”

In summary, CT-TRP is having a positive impact on teacher residents and mentor teachers of color, as well as on the school communities where teacher residents and graduates work, particularly as a result of the holistic supports provided by the program, the communal aspect of the program, and the cohort model. Furthermore, teacher residents who have more positive experiences with their mentors tend to have more positive experiences of the program. Additionally, several constituents cite financial support and support with navigating the certification and licensure system as essential for supporting residents and graduates of color to enter and continue teaching.

Research Question 3. *How well does CT-TRP prepare teacher residents and graduates to be teachers of record?*

Overall, teacher resident, mentor teacher, graduate, and principal perceptions of preparedness indicate that the program is preparing residents well. The applicability of coursework, increased clinical experience, and exposure to the demands and expectations of being a teacher of record makes residents prepared.

Teacher resident and graduate self-perception and mentor perception of preparedness

Figures 19, 20, and 21 provide data on CT-TRP residents and graduates self-perception of preparedness as well as mentor perception of resident preparedness. Figure 19 provides percentages of teacher residents and graduates of the program for 2022-23 reporting themselves to be prepared or very well prepared to be a teacher of record, as well as the percentage of mentor teachers for 2022-23 to report this about their residents. As shown in the figure, large majorities of residents and graduates reported to be prepared or very well prepared (91% and 86%, respectively). A majority of mentor teachers – 63% – also reported their residents to be prepared or very well prepared, although a smaller percentage of mentors reported their residents to be prepared or very well prepared than residents reported about themselves. As discussed below, focus groups and interviews support these findings.

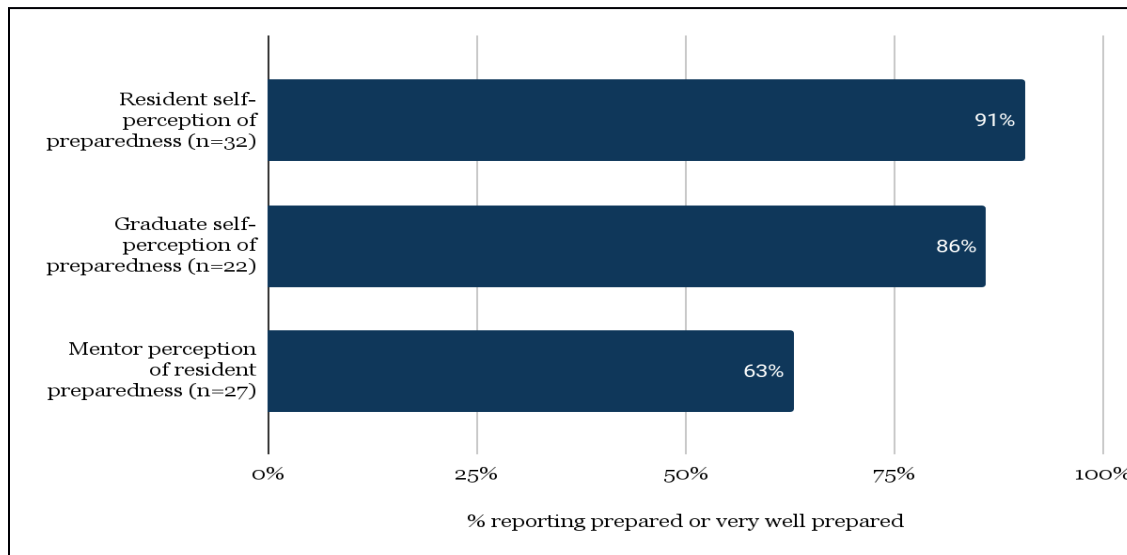


Sheila Adams (left) is a mentor and Lynda Genell (right) is a teacher resident at the Connecticut Teacher Residency Program. This photo was taken at West Vine Street Elementary School in Sonington, Conn.

Figure 20 illustrates average responses for these same categories in 2022-2023 but compares them to the average responses across the NCTR Network. Resident and graduate self-perception of preparedness is high and relatively similar to resident and graduate self-perception of preparedness across the NCTR Network. Mentor perception of resident preparedness is slightly lower (2.7) for those in CT-TRP than mentors across the NCTR Network (3.15).

Then, Figure 21 compares average preparedness ratings among CT-TRP residents, graduates, and mentor teachers over time. In most years, on average, teacher residents and graduates have reported themselves to be prepared and to a similar extent across years, with the average rating for both groups being close to or greater than 3 (or “prepared”). On average, and in most years, mentor teachers have also reported residents to be prepared, although in most years they have not rated residents to be as prepared as residents have reported about themselves.

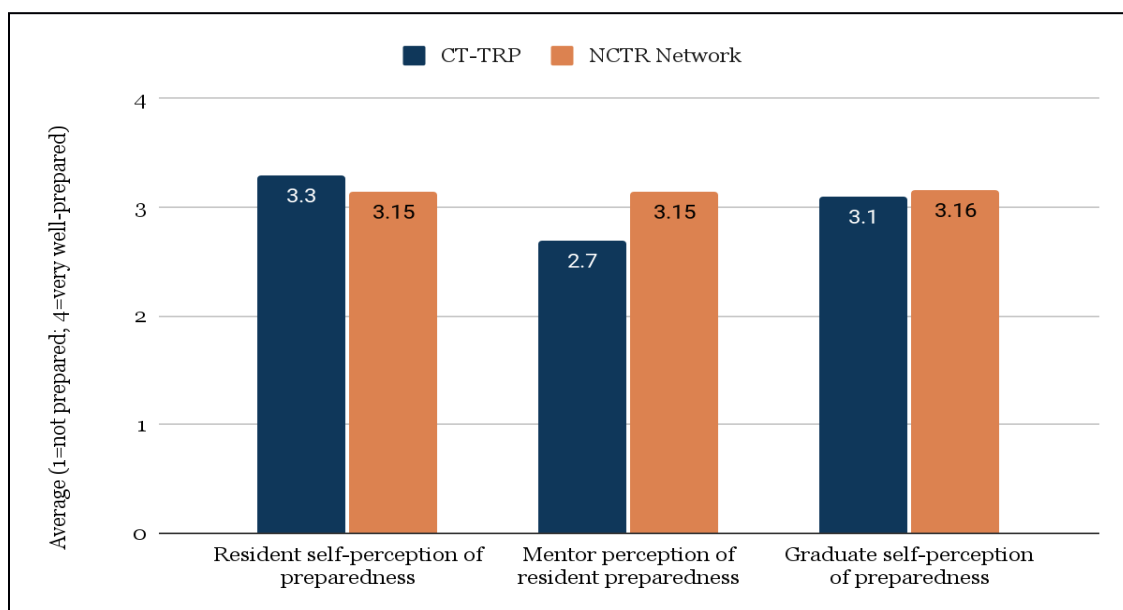
Figure 19. Percentages of CT-TRP Residents and Graduates Reporting to Be Prepared or Very Well Prepared to Be Teacher of Record, and Percentage of Mentor Teachers Reporting Resident to Be Prepared or Very Well Prepared, 2022-23



Source: NCTR Residency Experience Surveys, 2023

Note: Teacher residents and graduates are asked, “At this point in the year, how prepared are you to teach as the teacher of record?”. Mentor teachers are asked, “At this point in the year, how prepared is your resident to teach as the teacher of record?”

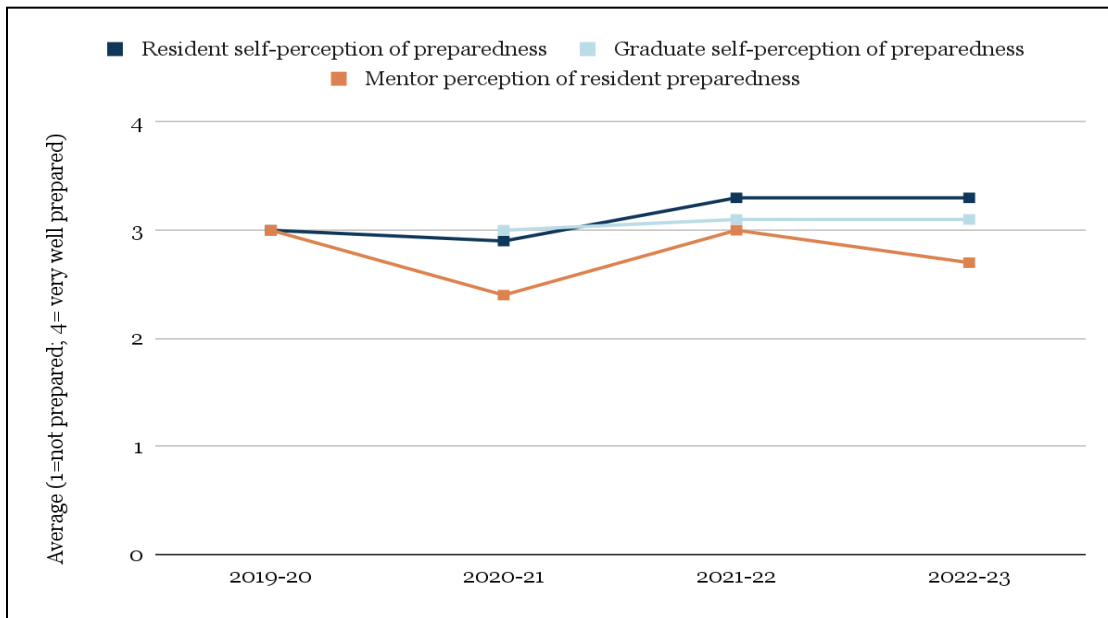
Figure 20. Average Perceived Preparedness among Residents, Mentor Teachers, and Graduates of CT-TRP, and Across NCTR Network



Source: NCTR Residency Experience Surveys, 2023

Note: Teacher residents and graduates are asked, “At this point in the year, how prepared are you to teach as the teacher of record?”. Mentor teachers are asked, “At this point in the year, how prepared is your resident to teach as the teacher of record?”.

Figure 21. Average Perceived Preparedness among Residents, Mentor Teachers, and Graduates of CT-TRP, 2019-20 to 2022-23



Sources: NCTR Residency Experience Surveys 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023

Note: Teacher residents and graduates are asked, “At this point in the year, how prepared are you to teach as the teacher of record?”. Mentor teachers are asked, “At this point in the year, how prepared is your resident to teach as the teacher of record?”

Effectiveness of preparation

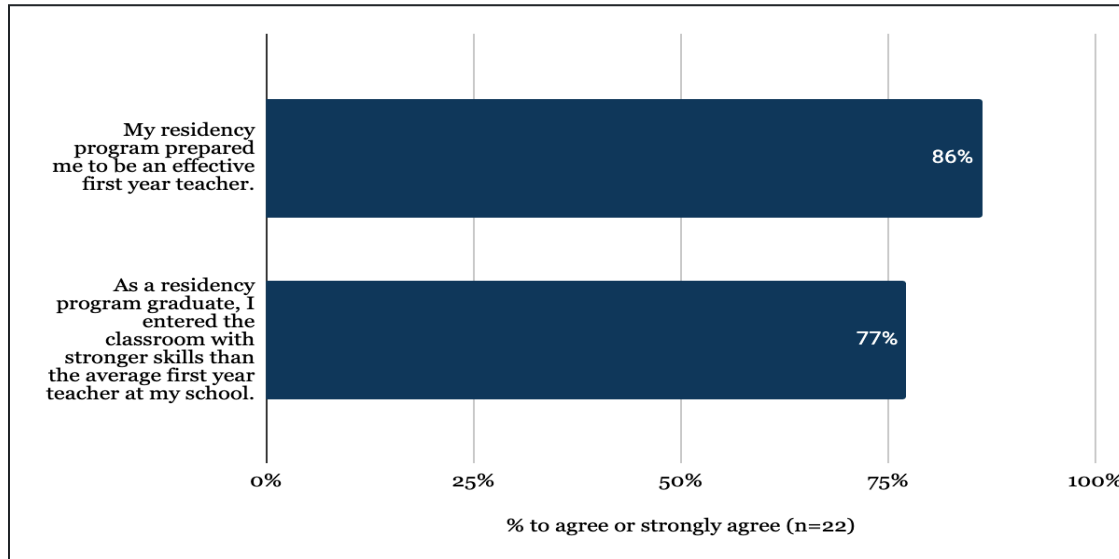
Figures 22, 23, and 24 illustrate CT-TRP graduates reporting on different statements about effectiveness of preparation. Figure 22 reports percentages of the extent to which in 2022-2023, graduates agree that their residency prepared them to be an effective first year teacher (86%) and that they entered the classroom with stronger skills than the average first year teacher at their school (77%).

Figure 23 reports on these same categories for CT-TRP graduates but compares the average responses to those of graduates across the NCTR Network. In 2022-2023, graduates from both CT-TRP and across the NCTR Network agreed or strongly agreed to these statements, with the NCTR Network graduates having slightly higher average responses.

Figure 24 examines these same categories over a three year period, 2020-2021, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023. CT-TRP graduates consistently report that the program

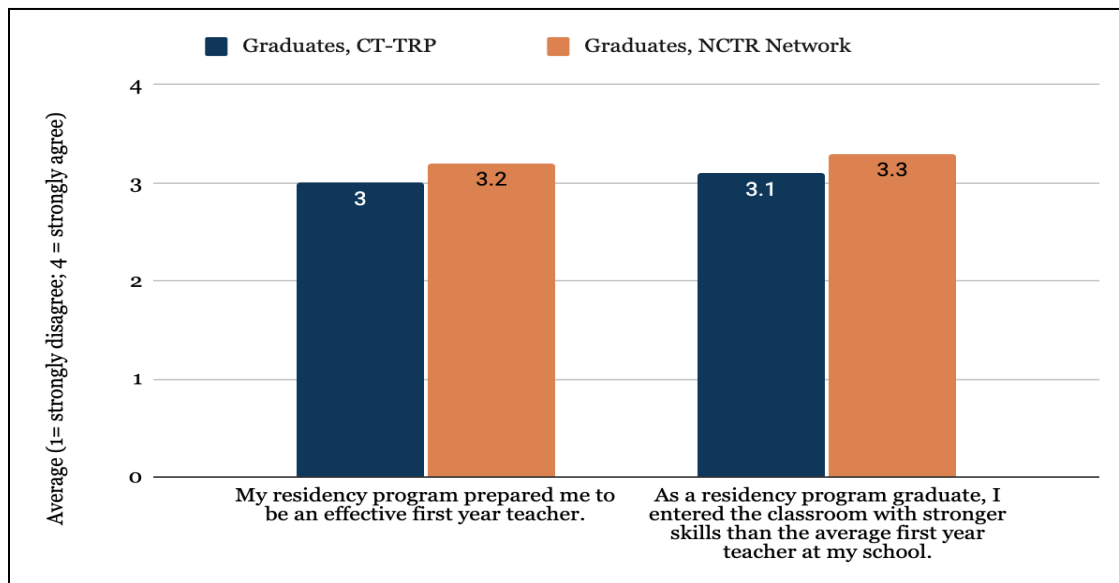
prepared them to be a first year teacher and that as a residency graduate, they entered the classroom with stronger skills than the average first year teacher at their school.

Figure 22. Percentage of CT-TRP Graduates Reporting to Agree with Different Statements about Effectiveness of Preparation, 2022-23



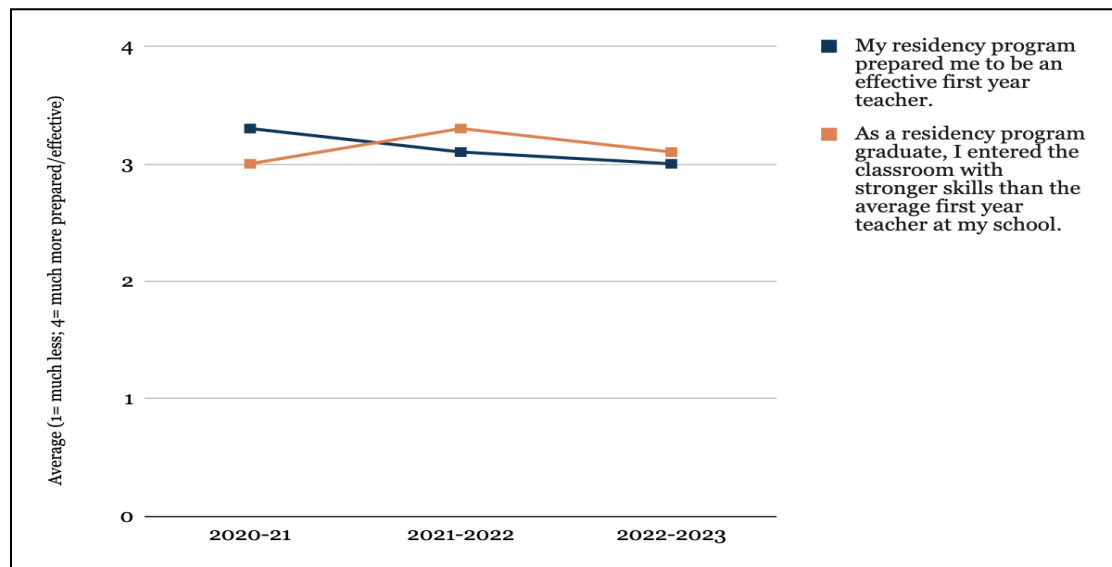
Source: NCTR Residency Experience Surveys, 2023

Figure 23. Average Agreement with Different Statements about Effectiveness of Preparation among Graduates of CT-TRP and Across NCTR Network, 2022-23



Source: NCTR Residency Experience Surveys, 2023

Figure 24. Average Agreement with Different Statements about Effectiveness of Preparation among Graduates of CT-TRP, 2020-21 to 2022-23



Sources: NCTR Residency Experience Surveys 2021, 2022, 2023

Principal perception of teacher resident and graduate preparedness

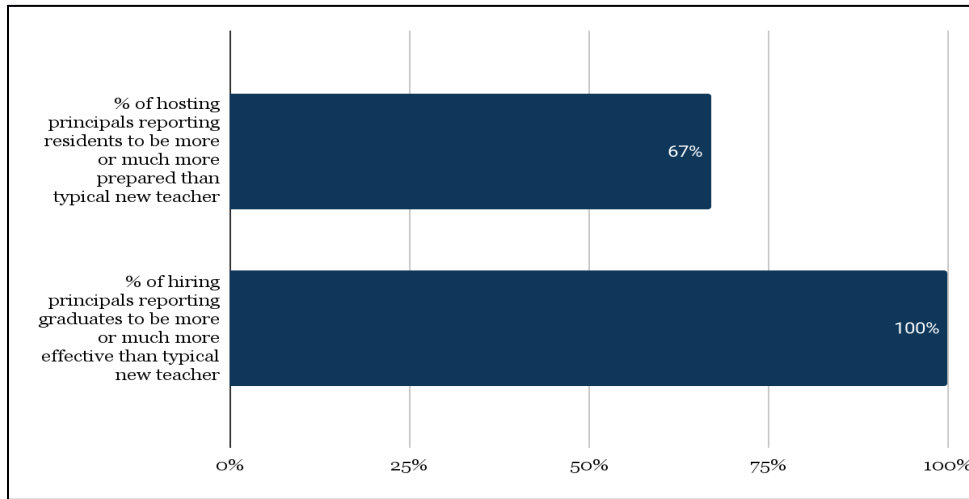
Principals report teacher residents and graduates to be more prepared and more effective than a typical new teacher. Figures 25, 26, and 27 provide data about hosting and hiring principals’ reports of resident preparedness and effectiveness. Figure 25 provides the percentage of principals who hosted residents in 2022-23 and who hired a graduate of the program to report residents and graduates as more prepared and more effective than a typical new teacher, respectively. As shown in the figure, majorities of hiring principals and hosting principals reported residents and graduates to be more prepared or effective than a typical new teacher – 67% and 100%, respectively.

Figure 26 compares average preparedness ratings hosting and hiring principals gave CT-TRP residents and graduates, respectively, to those of hosting and hiring principals for other programs in the NCTR Network for 2022-23. The average ratings that CT-TRP and NCTR Network principals gave for residents and graduates are similar, although the average rating from CT-TRP principals is slightly lower (3 vs. 3.3 among hosting principals, and 3 vs. 3.2 among hiring principals).

Figure 27 reports, among principals, the average perceived relative preparedness of CT-TRP residents and graduates over time. Hosting principals generally report that residents are more prepared or much more prepared than a typical new teacher with the highest average ratings happening in 2020-2021 (3.67) and a decrease in average ratings in 2021-2022 (2.71). Similarly, hiring principals' average responses consistently

suggest that graduates are more effective than a typical new teacher (2020-2021 = 3, 2021-2022 = 2.75, 2022-2023 = 3).

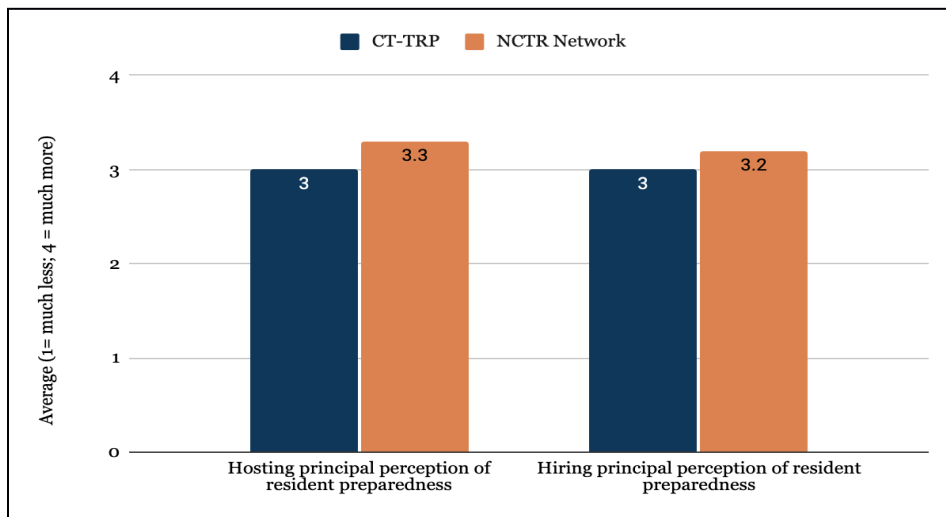
Figure 25. Percentages of Principals Hosting CT-TRP Teacher Residents Reporting Residents to Be More or Much More Prepared to Teach than ‘Typical’ New Teacher, and Percentage of Principals Hiring CT-TRP Graduates Reporting Graduates to Be More or Much More Effective than ‘Typical’ New Teacher



Source: NCTR Residency Experience Surveys, 2023

Note: Hosting principals are asked, “How prepared overall are residents compared to a ‘typical’ new teacher in comparable areas and grade levels?” Hiring principals are asked, “How effective overall are residents compared to a ‘typical’ new teacher in comparable areas and grade levels?”

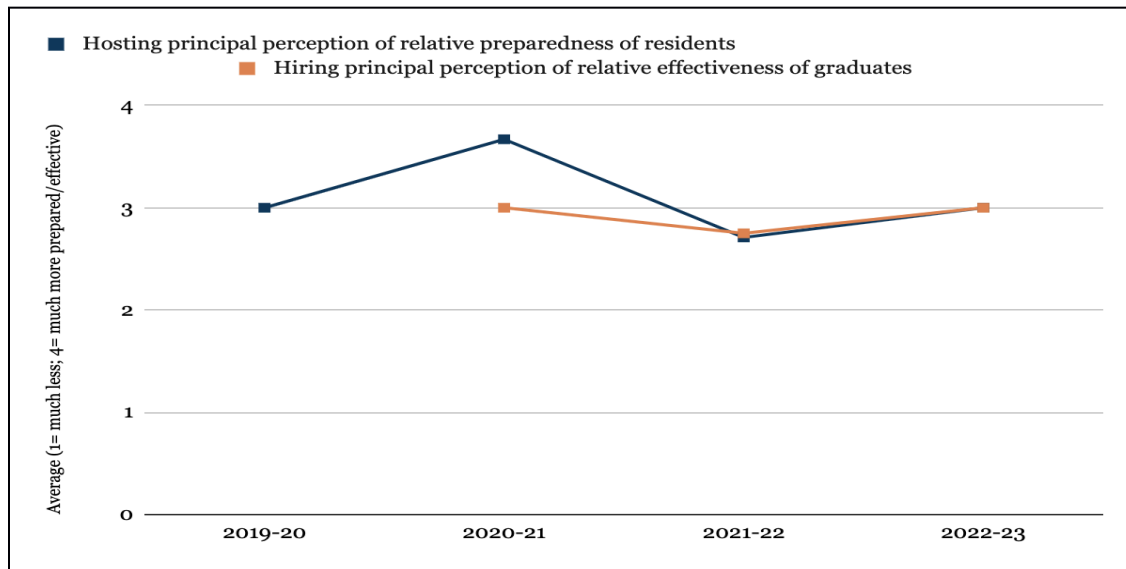
Figure 26. Average Perceived Relative Preparedness of Teacher Residents and Graduates among Principals Hosting CT-TRP Residents or Hiring CT-TRP Graduates, and Principals Across NCTR Network



Source: NCTR Residency Experience Surveys, 2023

Note: Hosting principals are asked, “How prepared overall are residents compared to a ‘typical’ new teacher in comparable areas and grade levels?”. Hiring principals are asked, “How effective overall are residents compared to a ‘typical’ new teacher in comparable areas and grade levels?”

Figure 27. Average Perceived Relative Preparedness of CT-TRP Residents and Graduates among Principals, 2019-20 to 2022-23



Sources: NCTR Residency Experience Surveys 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023

Note: Hosting principals are asked, “How prepared overall are residents compared to a ‘typical’ new teacher in comparable areas and grade levels?” and hiring principals are asked, “How effective overall are the residency program graduates working in your school compared to that of a ‘typical’ new teacher in comparable areas and grade levels?”

In interviews and focus groups, constituents agreed that CT-TRP is effectively preparing teachers. **Teacher residents learn the expectations of the school and district, and constituents regularly credited the clinical experience in combination with applicable coursework** as a key mechanism to preparing residents for the realities of the classroom. As one graduate reflected, “*This program really, they really helped me a lot. The course was rigorous. So, when I went into my teaching, I just kind of took that rigorous with the same passion, you know? I knew it wasn’t gonna be easy and I embraced that. And because of that I think that’s what made me successful.*”

Teacher residents are also prepared for the schools they eventually get hired into. **Every principal interviewed had hired a resident placed at their training site, showing how the residency model can create a channel for recruiting effective, diverse teachers.** Since CT-TRP recruits directly from the schools within which they aim to prepare and hire teacher residents, the residents are already embedded in the school community and are better prepared than teachers who may come from outside the community. A mentor

teacher noted how the teacher resident knew the expectations of the school. *“I was in third grade that year and she was awesome. She had a lot of experience in school, which I think helped her. So, she kind of knew the responsibilities that a teacher has and the workload that comes with that. So, I felt like she had a lot of knowledge that she was bringing to the table just starting off. She also had worked in our building previously. So, she had that as an advantage, too. She knew some of the students, she knew some of the routines, she knew we were a theme school so she knew all about our theme and what goes along with that. I think personally my experience with that was pretty great.”*

Other interviewees compared teacher residents to teacher candidates prepared through other routes, affirming that the teacher residency better prepares teachers.

Principals universally agreed that CT-TRP residents are just as, if not more, prepared than teachers through other routes. Many indicated that the program structure is rigorous and prioritizes the critical integration of theory and practice in the program. One participating principal, when asked if CT-TRP trains a good teacher compared to traditional preparation, *“Yeah. I just think it’s better. I mean, I would say having gone through the onboarding year one, the residency of year one, just watching the rigor. So, it’s intent. Let me say it this way, I think it’s very, very strong in the preparation process. It also is very demanding. So, and those two things go together so you really do need a special person who signs up and is ready for that level of demand...inside of that you just get better outcomes.”*

Another principal stated, *“I learned a lot of how new teachers, or how sometimes, even in our colleges, we don’t prepare the teachers for the ‘real world’ of teaching, you know? It’s always like that ‘theory of teaching.’ So, I think they were a little more prepared than a teacher that’s coming right out of college because they had that theory piece, but they also had that practical piece.”*

One mentor teacher stated, *“I had had a bunch of student teachers prior to this program. And they would come in in January and it was very difficult for them to really see what teaching is all about from the beginning of the school year because they’d come into an established classroom. And I feel like the first few months of school are the most and where beginning teachers would struggle the most, myself included, when I started teaching. And so, that part of the program was especially appealing. That they would be with me from, you know, even the first few days of school all the way until the end of the year and we could really show them all the pieces of it.”*

Even teacher residents recognize the difference in the quality of their preparation compared to other routes, *“There’s another person that I know, she’s doing the regular route, the normal teacher route. You know, she goes four months without any pay and*

she talks about it all the time how difficult it is and the fact that, you know, four months is just a snippet. But to work the whole school year and see it from beginning to end, I think for somebody who's never even been in the school or who hasn't had much experience, they get a chance to see it from beginning to end. So, for me it's been wonderful."

Another teacher resident stated, "I feel very prepared. Being there from start to finish and being at every PD and every teacher's meeting, every plan time with the teacher, I feel like I have a whole very holistic grasp. And I'm prepared to be a teacher of record. And I see other student teachers coming in and out throughout the year. Because obviously they're there a shorter amount of time. And I've been thinking to myself, wow, like how are they – how can they be prepared? Because I feel like I've already seen so much more that a traditional route almost looks like it's lacking, comparatively."

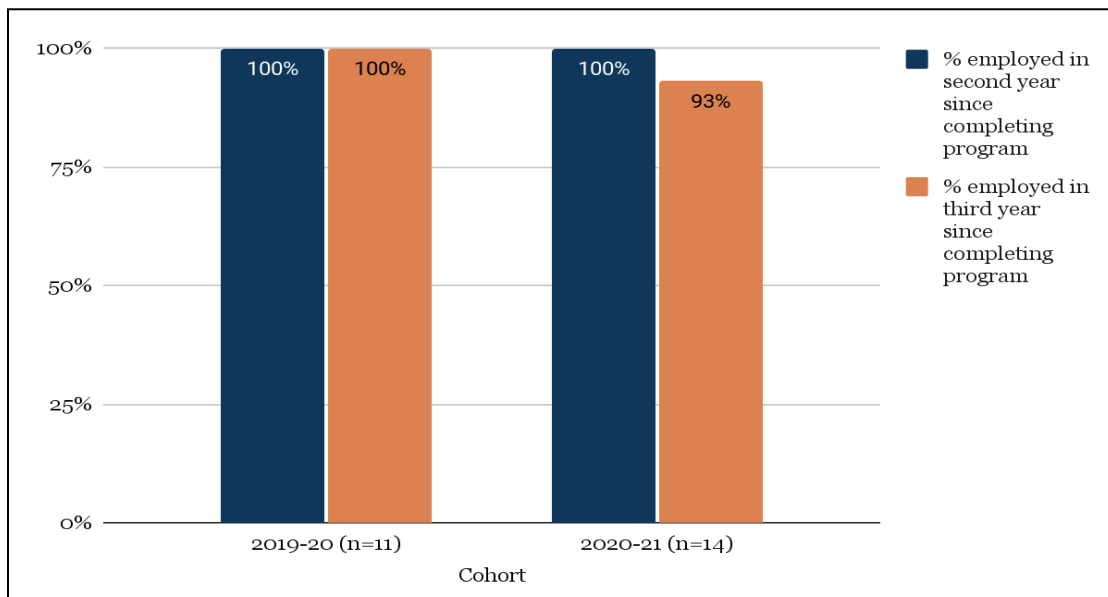
In summary, constituents report that CT-TRP is preparing teacher residents well and that teacher residents are more prepared than the average first-year teacher. The clinical experience and aligned coursework are cited as key factors in the effective preparation.

Research Question 4. What is the impact of CT-TRP on the retention of graduates?

CT-TRP is positively impacting the retention of program graduates, with most graduates teaching in Title I schools in the program's partner districts. The preparation the program provides and the support it provides to teacher residents once they become teachers of record enables graduates to continue teaching.

Results show that retention rates for CT-TRP program completers are high. Figure 28 illustrates the percentage of CT-TRP program completers who were hired within one year of completing the program, and also employed in the second and third years since program completion—100% of the 2019-2020 cohort who were hired within one year were still employed in the second and third years since completing the program and 100% of the 2020-2021 cohort were still employed in the second year since completing the program while 93% of that same cohort were still employed in the third year since completing the program.

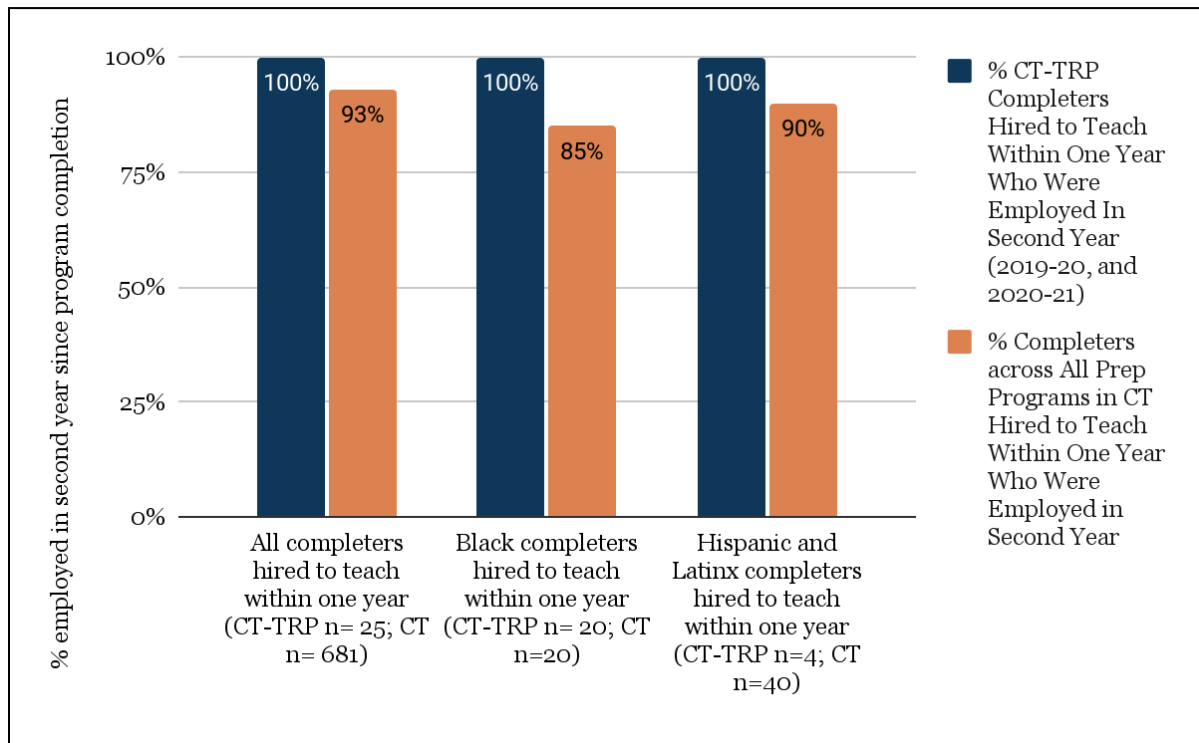
Figure 28. *Percentage of CT-TRP Completers Who Were Employed in Second and Third Years Since Program Completion by Cohort*



Source: NCTR Annual Program Data Survey for 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023

Compared to all program completers in CT who were hired within one year, CT-TRP completers so far return to teach at a relatively high rate, including Black, and Hispanic and Latinx completers. Figures 29 and 30 showcase the percentage of CT-TRP completers who were hired within one year compared to completers across all teacher preparation programs in CT who were hired within one year and were still employed in the second and fourth years since completing the program by race and ethnicity. 100% of CT-TRP completers from the 2019-2020 and the 2020-2021 cohorts who were hired within one year were still employed in their second year of teaching, and 100% of the 2019-2020 cohort were still employed in their fourth year of teaching after completing the program. These return rates are higher than for all completers in CT who are hired within one year. For example, 93% of 2017-2018 completers across all CT preparation programs who were hired within one year and were employed in their second year after program completion, and 78% of 2016-2017 completers who were hired within one year returned to teach in the fourth year after completing their program. Among Black 2017-2018 completers in CT who were hired to teach within one year, 85% were still employed in teaching in their second year after program completion, and among Black 2016-2017 completers who were hired to teach within one year, 84% returned to teach for a fourth year. And among Hispanic and Latinx program completers in CT who were hired to teach within one year, 90% of the 2017-2018 cohort were still employed in their second year and 65% of the 2016-2017 cohort were still employed in their fourth year since completing the program.

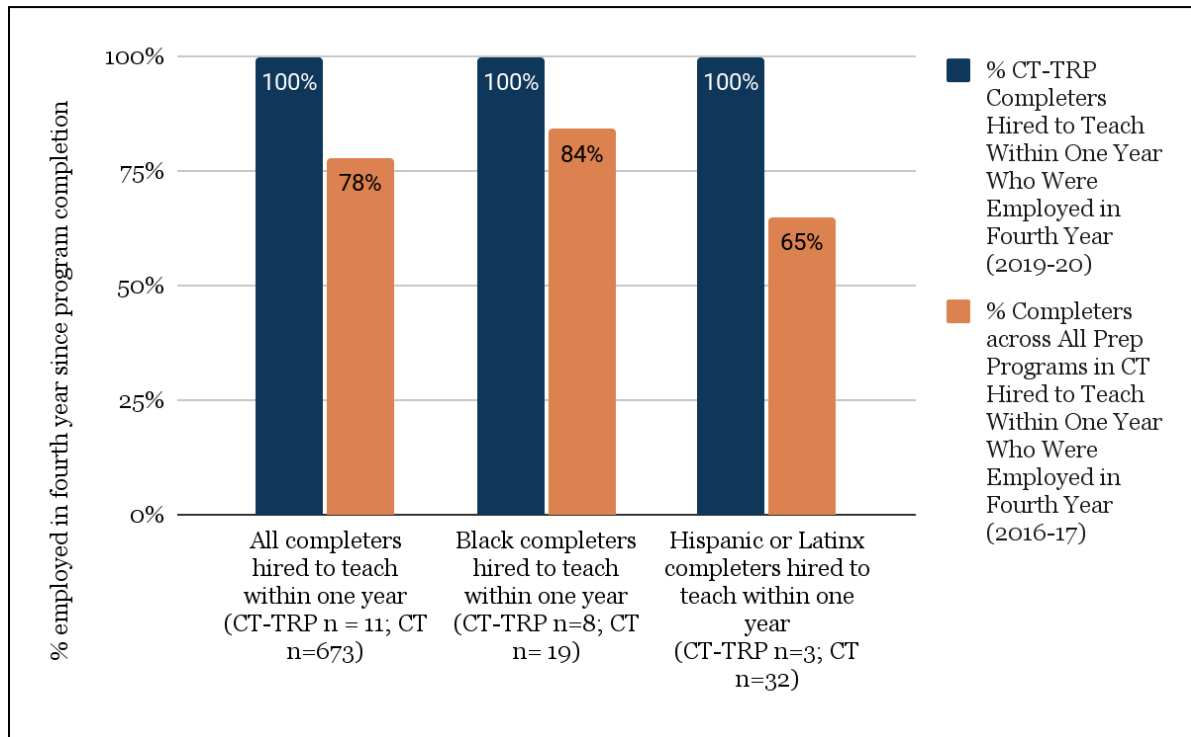
Figure 29. Percentage of 2019-20 and 2020-21 CT-TRP Completers, and 2017-18 Completers Across All TPPs in CT Who Were Hired to Teach Within One Year And Also Employed in Second Year Since Completing Program by Race and Ethnicity



Sources: (1) NCTR Annual Program Data Survey for 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023. (2) EdSight Educator Preparation Provider Quality Measures Report. Connecticut State Department of Education. Retrieved from https://public-edsight.ct.gov/educators/educator-preparation-provider-quality-measures-report?language=en_US. These are the most recent, trustworthy data from the state. The state numbers for 2018-19 seem to be incomplete, and they differ from the numbers for previous years (which are all fairly similar to one another).

Note: All but one CT-TRP completer in the years displayed identified as Black and/or Hispanic and Latinx. Thus, the figure only includes data for these groups.

Figure 30. Percentages 2019-20 CT-TRP Completers, and 2016-17 Completers Across All TPPs in CT Who Were Who Were Hired to Teach Within One Year And Also Employed in Fourth Year Since Completing Program by Race and Ethnicity



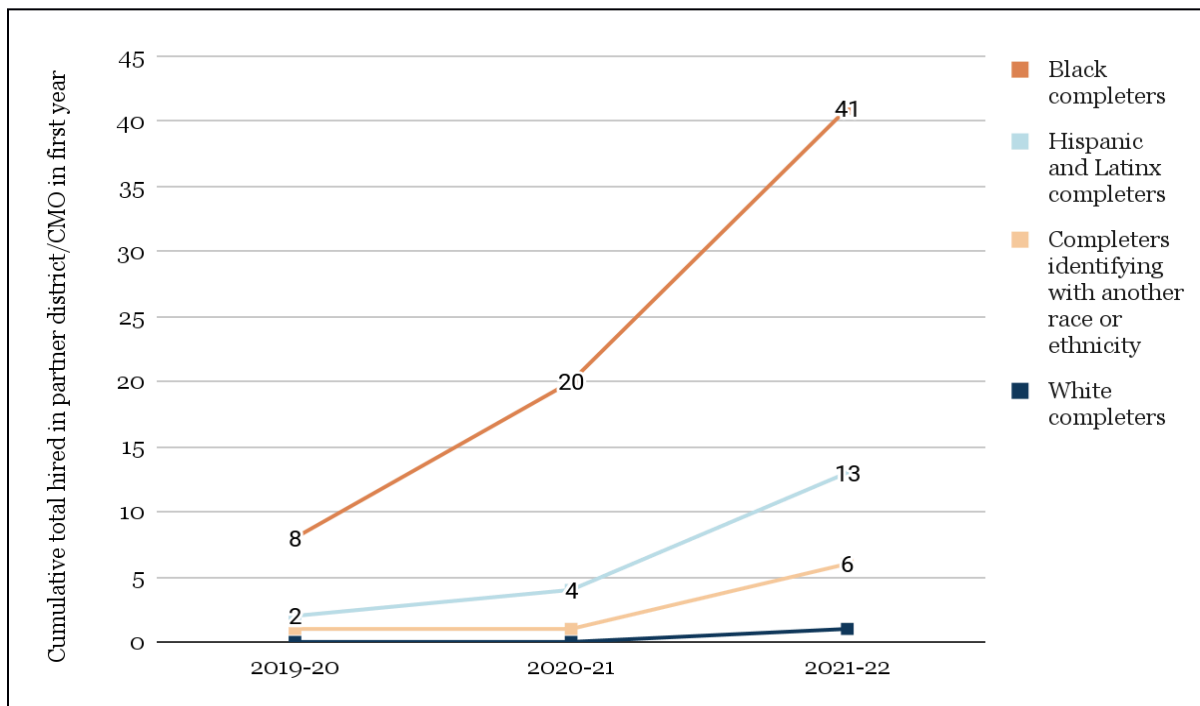
Sources: (1) NCTR Annual Program Data Survey for 2020, 2021, and 2023. (2) EdSight Educator Preparation Provider Quality Measures Report. Connecticut State Department of Education. Retrieved from https://public-edsight.ct.gov/educators/educator-preparation-provider-quality-measures-report?language=en_US. 2016-17 appears to be the most recent available and complete data for the state. The %s for 2018-19 and 2017-18 completers are unbelievably low and vastly different from previous years (e.g., for 2018-19 completers, 2 out of over 800 returning).

Note: All but one CT-TRP completer in 2019-20 identified as Black and/or Hispanic and Latinx. Thus, the figure only includes data for these groups.

Figures 31 and 32 show the cumulative number of CT-TRP completers who were hired to teach in partner districts/charter schools or in Title I schools in their first year since completing the program by race and ethnicity. Almost all CT-TRP completers are hired to teach in one of the program’s partner districts or charter schools as well as in a Title I school in those districts in their first year of teaching. Cumulatively, from 2019-20 to 2020-21, 62 CT-TRP completers were hired to teach in one of the program’s partner districts or charter schools in their first year of teaching. This includes 41 Black CT-TRP completers, 13 Hispanic and Latinx CT-TRP completers, one white CT-TRP completer, and

six CT-TRP completers identifying with some other race or ethnicity.⁸ Cumulatively, from 2019-20 to 2020-21, 62 CT-TRP completers were hired to teach in Title I schools in their first year of teaching. This includes 39 Black CT-TRP completers, 11 Hispanic and Latinx CT-TRP completers, one white CT-TRP completer, and six CT-TRP completers identifying with some other race or ethnicity were hired to teach in Title I schools in their first year of teaching. Based on previously reported retention data, it is likely that most if not all of these hires are still teaching in Title I schools in partner districts or charter schools.

Figure 31. Cumulative Total Number of CT-TRP Completers Who Were Hired to Teach in Partner District/CMO in First Year Since Completing Program by Race and Ethnicity

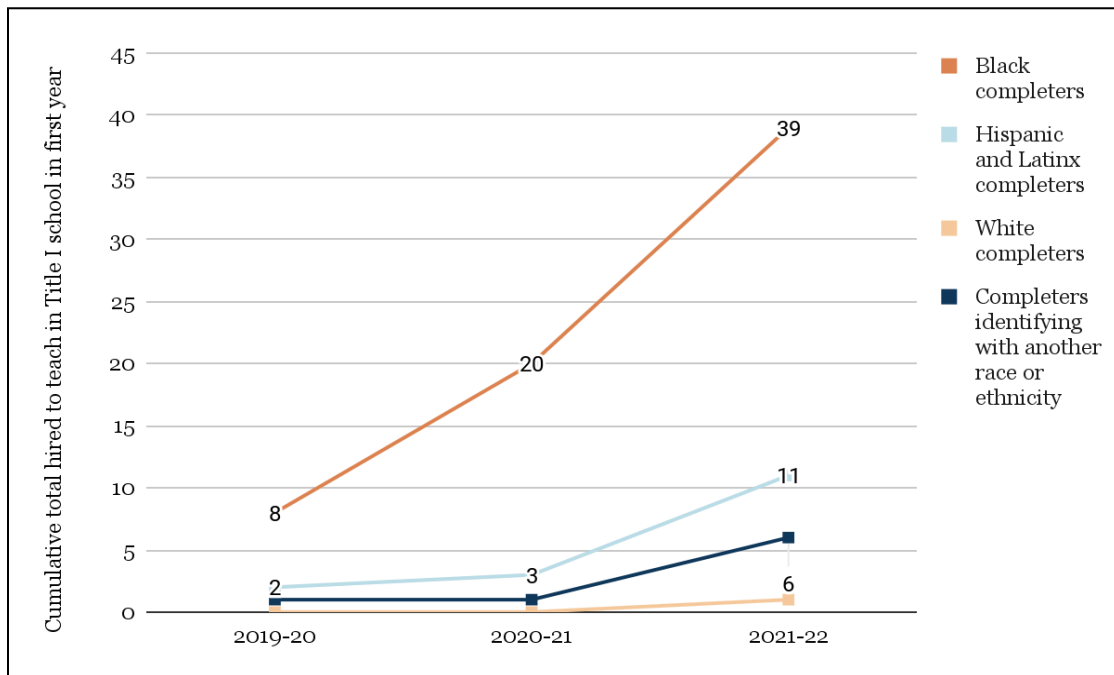


Sources: (1) NCTR Annual Program Data Survey for 2021, 2022, and 2023.

Note: The numbers displayed do not represent the number of completers teaching in a partner district or charter school in the year listed, but rather how many completers were hired to teach in a partner district or charter school in their first year by the time of the given school year.

⁸ The categories that the program reported racial and ethnic data to NCTR include American Indian and Alaska Native, Black and African American, Hispanic and Latinx, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, White, and Other race or ethnicity. This means that six individuals identified with some other race or ethnicity than the aforementioned ones.

Figure 32. Cumulative Total Number of CT-TRP Completers Who Were Hired to Teach in Title I schools in First Year Since Completing Program by Race and Ethnicity



Sources: (1) NCTR Annual Program Data Survey for 2021, 2022, and 2023.

Note: The numbers displayed do not represent the number of completers teaching in a Title I school in the year listed, but rather how many completers were hired to teach in a Title I school in their first year by the time of the given school year.

After graduating, candidates initially earn a Residency Educator Certificate. **CT-TRP continues to provide support to residency graduates after they become the teacher of record—graduates are directly supported by CT-TRP staff, as well as the district.** In the first year, CT-TRP provides a Sponsor Teacher who will participate in at least one hour biweekly meetings with the CT-TRP teacher, ongoing professional development, and monthly coaching calls with CT-TRP staff. During the first 4 months of their 2nd year, they take a class called Planning Seminar and are mentored by a Sponsor Teacher for support. After a successful experience, candidates then can apply for an Initial Teaching Certification. Graduates also have access to ongoing networks and peer groups to support their early years in teaching. This wrap-around and continued support increases the likelihood that these early career teachers will remain in the profession (Rockman et al., 2018; Worley & Zerbino, 2023; Silva et al., 2015). One graduate stated, “*My program has provided many supports to prepare me for my role as a teacher. For example, since completing my residency, I am a part of an affinity group that meets monthly to discuss our current experiences, read and discuss articles about current events in our education system, and exchange great implementation ideas. This group also acts as a support*

group for first, second, and third year minority teachers. In addition to this, as a first year teacher, I was provided a sponsor teacher that I was able to meet with bi-weekly to ask questions and get feedback from. First year graduates are also provided a New Teacher Mentor who visits your room to conduct observations and provide meaningful feedback that helps you tailor your instruction moving forward.”

Another graduate stated, “Our affinity groups that we have monthly are very beneficial to first year teachers. We are able to exchange ideas and get advice in real time about things that we may be experiencing in our roles.”

Furthermore, various statements made during the interviews and focus groups reveal how residents were uniquely positioned to remain in the classroom.

Graduates indicated that personal growth and the program’s influence on cultivating a mindset of self-challenge, resilience, and the acknowledgement of teaching as a challenging profession were all instrumental in their persistence in the profession. For example, one resident stated, *“This program really, they really helped me a lot. The course was rigorous. So, when I went into my teaching, I just kind of took that rigorous with the same passion, you know? I knew it wasn’t gonna be easy and I embraced that. And because of that I think that’s what made me successful. I, you know, all the hard work that I did while doing the courses, I did the same thing when I was teaching.”*

Another graduate stated, “The workload prepared us for the amount of work we have to do as first year students. If a person can get through the coursework they should be able to fulfill the first year obligation. I am using everything that was taught to me from the theories we learned about how students learn to adjust the lesson plans to align with student learning, to lesson planning. I am implementing one of the projects I created as an assignment for social studies. The students love it and my principal thinks it’s next level. I am very fortunate to have a successful residency and first year. My students understand the curriculum, they complete at least one project per unit, and the administrators are very happy with my students’ test result data.

Another graduate talked about the benefits of CT-TRP’s preparation to be a day-one ready teacher but also commented that the expected supports from the program waned in the third and fourth years, *“This program helped me prepare for some struggles that a first year teacher may not have encountered during their schooling. I was able to meet other colleagues and get comfortable with colleagues in the district. I was given an opportunity to visit other schools in the district giving me an upper hand on the type of school that will fit me. In my first year I was given more support and check-ins. Now going into my third and almost fourth I haven’t had any support from the program.”*

In summary, CT-TRP is positively impacting the retention of program graduates, with most graduates teaching in Title I schools in the program's partner districts. Teacher residents are uniquely positioned to remain in the classroom as a result of the rigorous and authentic preparation experience. The support provided by the program to graduates once they become teachers of record also enables graduates to continue teaching.

Research Question 5. *How effective is the CT-TRP's mentor recruitment, selection, and preparation, and how can the program improve in this area?*

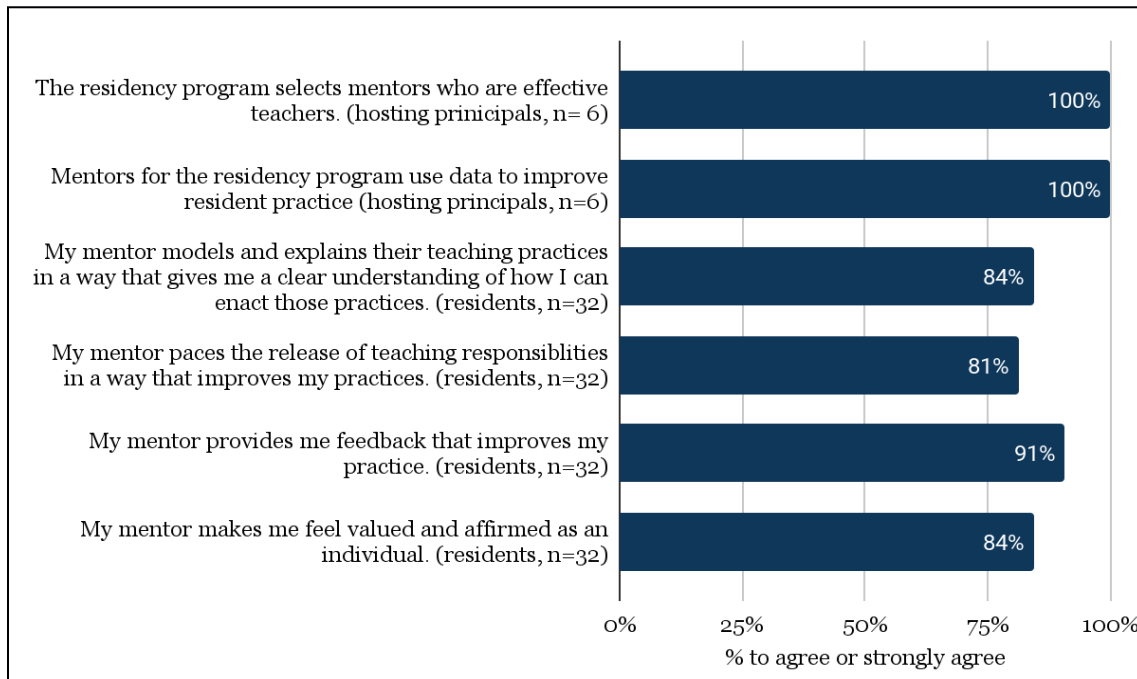
Overall, in terms of mentor recruitment, selection, and preparation, CT-TRP recruits effective mentor teachers and supports mentors well; yet, there is room for improvement in recruiting a more racially and ethnically diverse group of mentors and clarifying and communicating about roles and expectations as well as in the feedback the program provides to mentors.

Mentor effectiveness and the effectiveness of mentor selection

Overall, CT-TRP teacher residents and their hosting principals report that mentor teachers engage and implement key mentoring practices with teacher residents, and that mentors are effective classroom teachers.

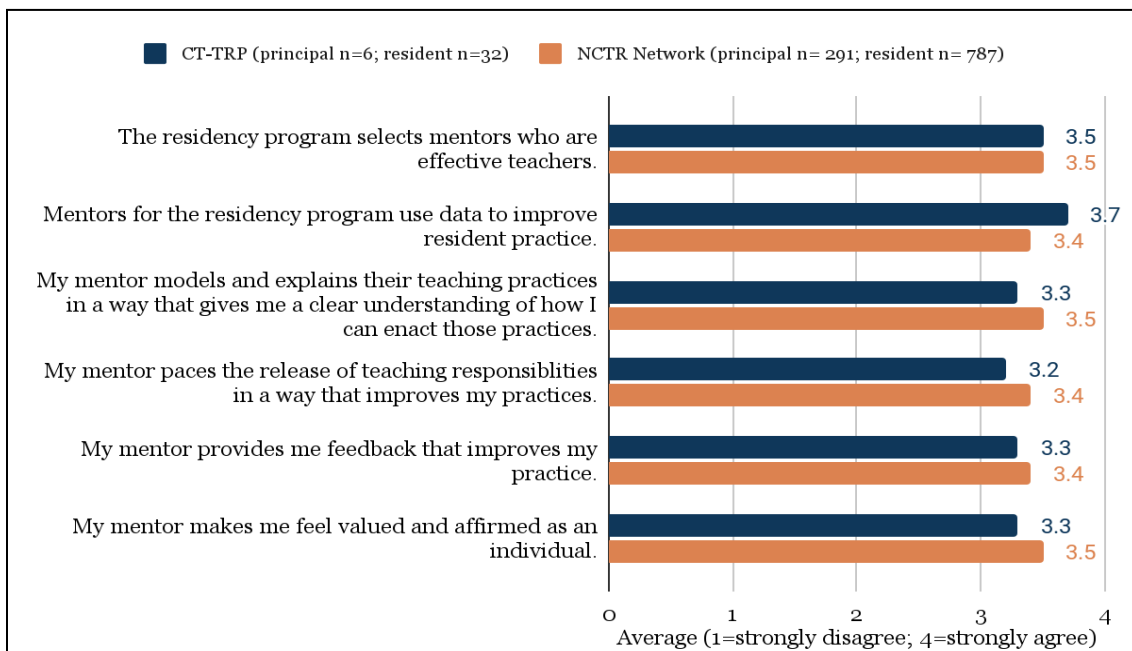
Figures 33, 34, and 35 illustrate perceptions of teacher residents and hosting principals on various statements related to mentor effectiveness and mentor selection. Figure 33 shows that in 2022-2023, 100% of principals thought that the teacher residency program selected mentors that were effective and that mentors did a good job of using data to support resident improvement. That same year, the majority of residents reported that they agree or strongly agree that mentors exemplify effectiveness, such as pacing the release of teaching responsibilities and providing feedback that improves practice. When examining these same items about whether the program selects effective mentors and mentor effectiveness compared to the NCTR Network in 2022-2023, results show similarly positive perceptions amongst principals and teacher residents—that is, teacher residents and principals, on average, agree or strongly agree that mentors are effective (Figure 34) and that the program's mentor selection process is effective. Last, when looking at these items about mentor selection and mentor effectiveness over time, principals and residents agreed or strongly agreed from 2019-2020 through 2022-2023 that mentor teachers are effective and that the program selects effective mentor teachers. (Figure 35)

Figure 33. Percentage of Teacher Residents and Hosting Principals for CT-TRP to Agree with Different Statements about Mentor Teachers for CT-TRP, 2022-23



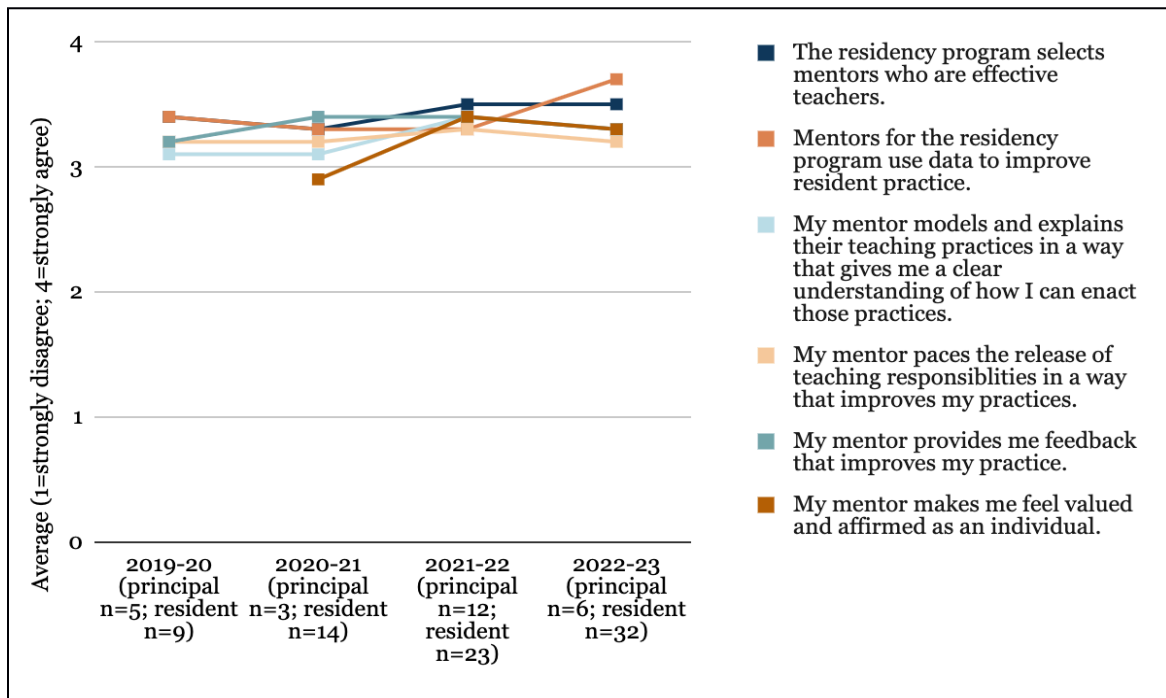
Source: NCTR Residency Experience Surveys 2023

Figure 34. Average Responses to NCTR Residency Experience Survey Items among Teacher Residents and Hosting Principals for CT-TRP, and Other Programs Across NCTR Network, 2022-23



Source: NCTR Residency Experience Surveys 2023

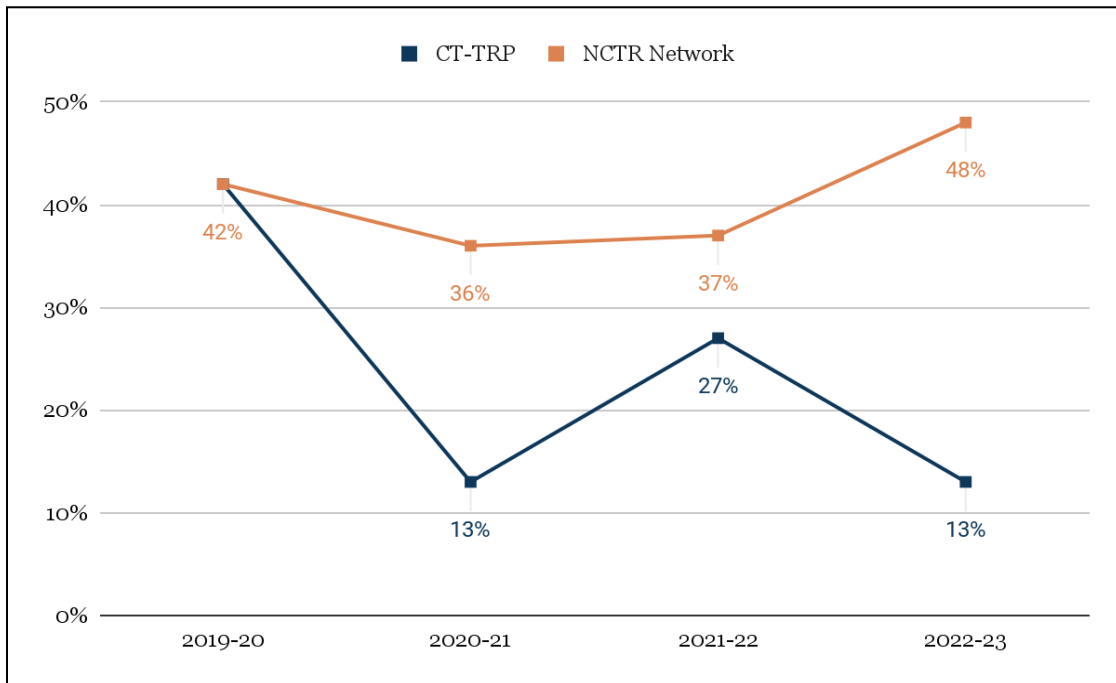
Figure 35. Average Responses to NCTR Residency Experience Survey Items among Teacher Residents and Hosting Principals for CT-TRP, 2019-20 to 2022-23



Sources: NCTR Residency Experience Surveys 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023

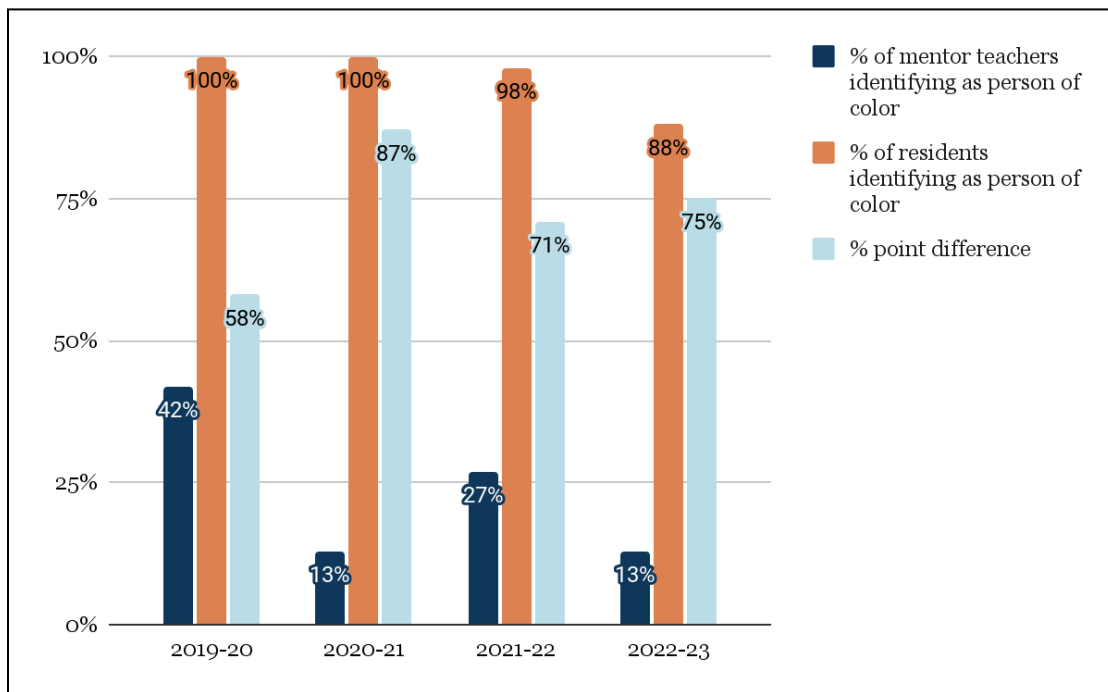
In all but 2019-20, CT-TRP has recruited a smaller percentage of mentor teachers of color than other programs in the NCTR Network typically do. The percentage of mentor teachers of color overall, and as compared to the percentage of residents of color has also varied over time. Figure 36 shows that CT-TRP has a lower percentage of mentors of color than what can be found in the NCTR Network. For example, in 2022-2023, programs in the NCTR Network had 48% mentor teachers of color while CT-TRP had 13%. The percent of mentors of color in CT-TRP in 2022-2023 is lower than the percent of mentors of color that the program had when it launched in 2019-2020 (42%). The percentage of mentors of color in the program is also much lower than the percentage of residents of color that the program enrolls—in 2019-2020 that gap was 58% and in 2022-2023 that gap was 75% (Figure 37).

Figure 36. Percentages of Mentor Teachers for CT-TRP and Other Programs Across the NCTR Network to Identify as People of Color



Source: NCTR Annual Program Data Survey for 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023.

Figure 37. Percentages of Residents of Color and Mentors of Color for CT-TRP, 2019-20 to 2022-23

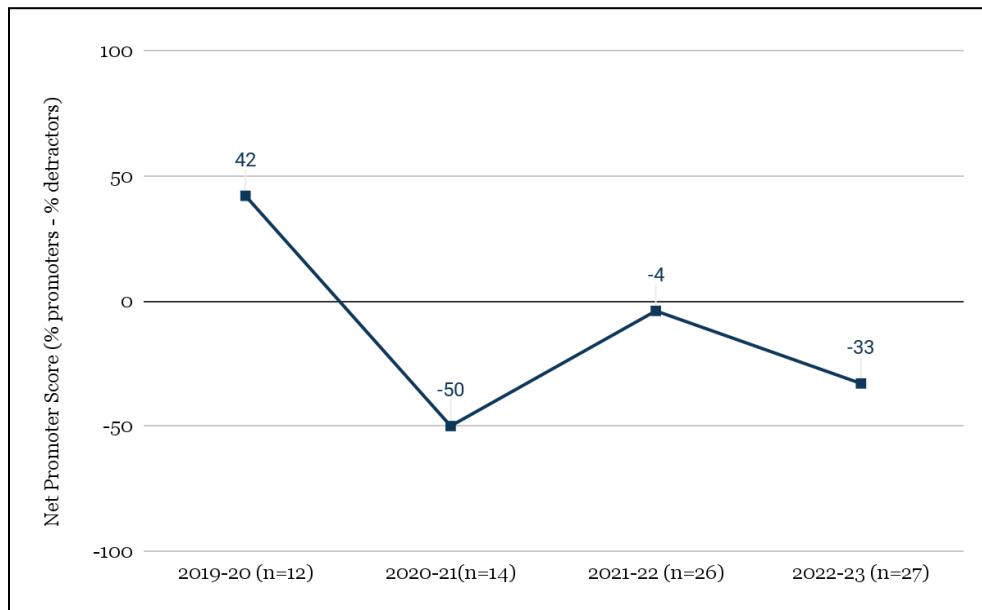


Source: NCTR Annual Program Data Survey for 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023.

Mentor experiences with the program

Figure 38 reports NPS among mentor teachers for the program from 2019-2020 to 2022-2023. NPS has been negative in every year except for 2019-20, meaning there are more mentors who are unlikely to recommend mentoring than there are who are very likely to do so.

Figure 38. Net Promoter Score among Mentor Teachers for CT-TRP, 2019-20 to 2022-23



Source: NCTR Residency Experience Surveys, 2023

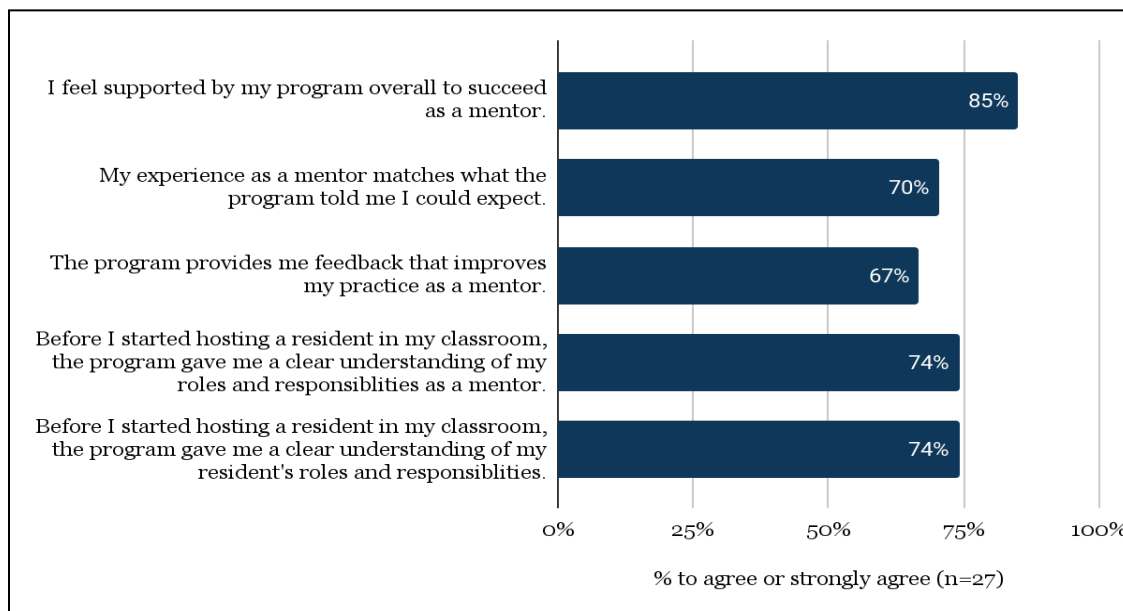
Note: Net Promoter Scores (NPS) are used across various industries to gauge customer experience and loyalty. In this case, teacher residents are asked to respond to the question, “How likely are you to recommend your program to a friend or colleague looking to become a teacher?” on a zero (0) - to 10 scale, with zero being “Not at all likely” and 10 being “Extremely likely”. Those who select 9 or 10 (i.e., very likely recommend the program) are considered ‘promoters’; those who select 7 or 8 are considered ‘passive’ (i.e., neither likely nor unlikely to recommend the program), and those who select 6 or below are considered ‘detractors’ (i.e., unlikely to recommend the program). NPS is calculated by subtracting the percentage of detractors from the percentage of promoters, and can range from -100 to +100, with higher scores representing higher satisfaction and greater likelihood that more individuals promote and recommend the program.

To better understand what might be driving NPS among mentor teachers, Figures 39, 40, and 41 show mentor teachers responses to various items about their experiences with the program compared to the NCTR Network and over time. While mentors are more likely to not recommend than to recommend mentoring for the program, most mentor teachers for CT-TRP nevertheless report to feel supported by CT-TRP in their role as a mentor. Still, on average, mentor teachers for CT-TRP are less likely than mentors from other programs in the NCTR Network to report that their mentoring experience matches

what the program told them to expect, that they were given a clear understanding of resident and mentor roles and responsibilities, and that they receive feedback from the program that helps them to improve their practice. As discussed later, in focus groups and interviews, mentor experiences varied, with mixed feedback on program support during challenging periods, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Professional development, including sessions on feedback and observation strategies, was identified as beneficial. However, there were concerns about clarity regarding mentors' evaluations of residents.

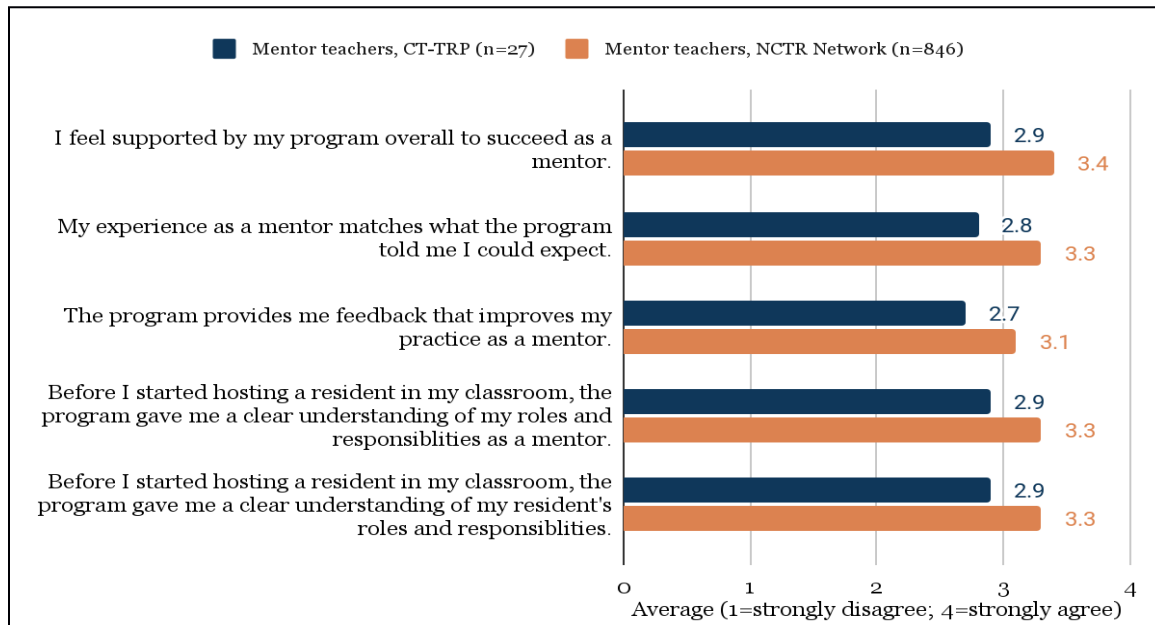
In 2022-2023, less than 75% of mentors agreed or strongly agreed that the experience of mentoring matches what they expected (70%); the program provides feedback that improves practice (67%); the program gave a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities as a mentor (74%); and the program gave a clear understanding of resident's roles and responsibilities (74%). Figure 40 compares these same categories for CT-TRP mentors and mentors across the NCTR Network in 2022-2023. On average, mentors in the Network have higher rates of answering that they agree or strongly agree with positive experiences as a mentor with their program than do the mentor teachers in CT-TRP. Last, data show that of the two items that have been asked of mentor teachers in CT-TPR over the past four years, responses about the extent to which they agree that the program has supported them to succeed has decreased slightly over time and responses about whether the program provides feedback to improve their practice has increased slightly over time. (Figure 41)

Figure 39. *Percentage of Mentors Teachers for CT-TRP to Agree with Different Statements about Program Support, 2022-23*



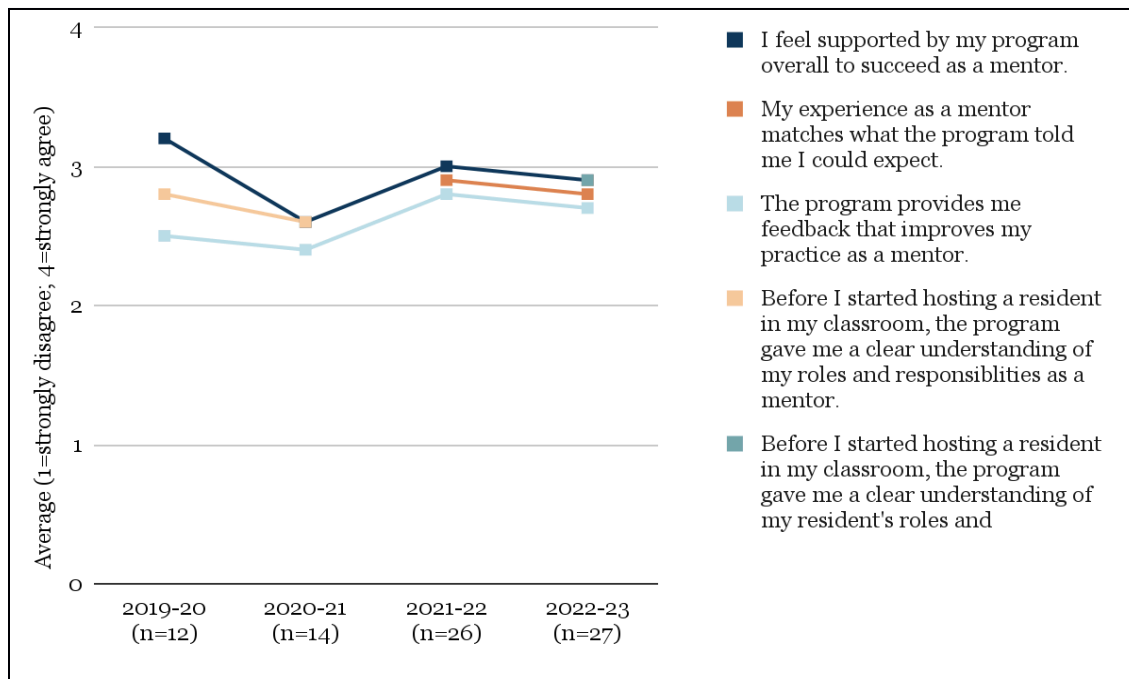
Source: NCTR Residency Experience Surveys 2023

Figure 40. Average Responses to NCTR Residency Experience Survey Items among Mentor Teachers for CT-TRP, and Other Programs Across the NCTR Network, 2022-23



Source: NCTR Residency Experience Surveys 2023

Figure 41. Average Responses to NCTR Residency Experience Survey Items among Mentor Teachers for CT-TRP, 2019-20 to 2022-23



Sources: NCTR Residency Experience Surveys 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023

Note: Data are not displayed if an item was not asked in a given year.

Qualitative data from interviews and focus groups about mentor teachers and the mentor experience yielded additional, insightful information. **For example, principals expressed the positive impact of the residency on mentor teachers.** One principal remarked, *“I think it helps the mentor teacher really go back to like the basics of teaching. You know, really planning like they used to do when they were beginning teachers, and not taking for granted that the students might know this because they have to model for the residents. I think it helps them kind of recenter their instruction, too. So, being more reflective of what they’re doing because they have to also remember that someone’s watching them and they have to kind of do the right thing or do it in the right manner that’s gonna support this teacher.”*

Another principal observed how a mentor teacher grew into a more effective leader, *“I think [the program] really turned on for her the adult learning thing, and ‘Oh, I can really help adults the same way I helped kids develop their confidence, their skills’, and so on. So, after this experience she was reaching out around things like, ‘Hey, do you have a grade level leader openings or are there opportunities to do more coaching for adults?’ So, absolutely this was a catalyst for her in opening up her perception around how she might contribute to the field more broadly.”*

A mentor teacher noted how the program enhanced her practice and ability to meet the holistic needs of diverse students, *“My mentoring experience allowed for me to study and understand the importance of cultural competence in the classroom. It also helped me to impact the teaching body as I exposed students to diverse staff members in a district that lacks diversity. This presented a window into the lives of others. Not only did it increase my cultural competence but it improved my coaching/leadership skills as I was given the opportunity to give feedback to my resident teacher daily.”*

Several graduates highlighted the importance of **matching well with their mentor**. Some graduates and residents had positive experiences with the mentors, while others struggled. Given the consequential role mentors play in teacher residency programs, the entire experience in the teacher residency can be highly affected by a less than ideal match between the mentor and the teacher resident. According to the interviews and focus groups, a few residents faced challenges with their mentors (e.g., less space to contribute, difficulty in communication, and clear expectations). Still, the program provided relative support through conversations, and ultimately helped residents find different placements when needed.

As the program has grown, program staff have had less control over mentor selection, and sometimes, individual principals select and match mentors with residents. Principals themselves noted that the most effective teacher may not be the best mentors who can

coach a new teacher and model for them. The variation in mentor selection, where sometimes the program can select a program and other times mentors are “voluntold” by an administrator, may be a reason to explain the relative need for enhanced mentor matching. One graduate had a negative experience with their first mentor, *“I guess the feelings just was not good from the beginning. And that was really hard for me because I like to be liked. It was a very strange feeling to experience. And I just, instead of me like coming out of my shell, I’m a pretty precarious person, who started to feel uncomfortable. Like the more closed off I was becoming and I literally felt like I was becoming like part of the walls and furniture. Like, I was disappearing in her classroom. I felt so small. You get emotional about this.”* This graduate ultimately worked with the CT-TRP coach and was able to get a placement in another mentor’s classroom. She realized that her new mentor was a much better fit, *“I had the most amazing experience with my new mentor. It was like night and day...She validated every reason why I want to teach. And it was an honor to be in her classroom. It was an honor to learn from her.”*

Another teacher resident stated, *“But the hard part about it being from start to finish is that you’re with that mentor the entire year and if it’s not a good fit that could be difficult. Mine, it was, it seemed like it was a good fit, but then we really grew together, and so I’m thankful for that. It worked out. I just feel like my first experience, I realize how much each classroom is almost like that teacher’s home because she had been in that classroom for years, or she’s got that position, or she set it up the way she wants it set up. And I just feel like it’s really hard sometimes with a mentor to take us in, take a step back, make us comfortable in that space. And it feels like we’re almost like a child. And we either could feel very welcomed, or very unwelcomed, or we could feel loved or unloved, or respected or not respected. Or we could feel like it’s somebody’s job and they’re just doing it for the money, or we could feel like they have a passion for it. So, I think the mentors really need to be trained to disrupt – They have to be able to disrupt their comfort, and they have to understand that this is almost like a sacrificial year for them. Almost realization like truly embrace us and also like define the term “mentor” because I also feel like at the beginning my teacher-mentor really felt like she was almost like a boss of me. Like, I felt like a student in her classroom. And we had a few things and I just realized, like wow somebody really needed to define the term because I saw mentorship as like a partnership, you’re helping me, you’re coming along with me, encouraging me. Not like someone wagging their finger or tattling or checking on me. So, but overall we really grew together and it’s been great. But I’ve seen in my cohort people having a lot of hard times with that.”*

Some teacher residents highlighted the positive impact of mentors who acknowledge their lack of understanding about the residents' backgrounds as teachers of color,

creating an environment where residents feel comfortable sharing their perspectives and experiences. One mentor teacher stated, *“I think that my resident and I had a lot of really amazing conversations about race. We talked about, you know, recognizing differences in the kids, and recognizing differences in each other. We talked about like our backgrounds. So, I think it allowed us to really have like some creative conversations with one another. I don’t know if it necessarily impacted the teaching...But I know it definitely impacted our relationship. And I think that’s important...it makes me more conscious to think about, you know, I have a very diverse population of students in front of me so it really, you know, lets me think about the struggles that they have experienced or might experience. And you know, I’m trying to set a precedent where we have to treat each other fairly and be respectful, and you know, it’s helping me create a classroom culture that is respectful and responsive to each other.”*

Mentor teachers noted they would appreciate greater consistency in communication and expectations from and about the role of mentoring in the program. Mentors expressed a desire for more frequent check-ins and communication from program coaches. One mentor commented when asked what the program can do to improve the experience for mentors, *“Better organization. More communication. People that are all on the same page so that you are not getting different answers depending on who you ask.”*

Several mentor teachers shared the need for improvements and support in specific areas, for example, one mentor stated, *“And I think speaking of “feedback,”...like still when I know we did the calibration this time around, but still I’d like the coaches to provide feedback to us on our feedback that we’re giving to our residents. Just because I’m always like, “Oh, am I doing this right”?...I feel like that’s something that the coaches could do as part of the calibration. We didn’t really like go over, we kind of just like talked back and forth about what we saw, not much about the feedback that I had written.”*

Another mentor teacher stated, *“There were times where there was confusion, where we weren’t necessarily sure what we were supposed to be doing. And sometimes it did feel like we were kind of being guided by, like you know the expression, ‘You’re flying by the seat of your pants.’ Like, sometimes it felt that way, and I get it, it’s a new program, they’re trying to work out all the kinks and everything. But you know, sometimes I question different things that [resident] was asked to do.”*

Another mentor teacher stated, *“I guess I’m just unclear on how much support should I be providing around edTPA or is it really just the – like the modeling and support of like what it’s like to teach in the classroom, how to look at lesson plans, and then they’re*

getting that support with their – within their cohort, with their coach, or in their you know, their Tuesday or Thursday classes. Because sometimes I feel like I could be doing more. It takes – it does take a lot of time, but I just don't know, you know, I'm just unclear on what level of support or feedback...around edTPA. If I should be focusing more time on that if other areas are, seem to be okay.

In summary, the program recruits and supports effective mentor teachers, yet there is room for improvement in recruiting a more racially and ethnically diverse group of mentors and further supporting mentor teachers' growth in cultural competency. There is also room for CT-TRP to improve in clarifying and communicating about roles and expectations for mentor teachers as well as in the feedback the program provides to mentors.

Research Question 6: *What policies and steps can CT-TRP, the state, and other institutions adopt, considering the research findings?*

Based on qualitative and quantitative data analysis, conversations with several state and district leaders, and information from publicly available documents, the findings of this report suggest the following five recommendations for CT-TRP as well as other teacher residency programs, teacher preparation programs, and state policymakers.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. *CT-TRP should tell the teacher residency story, particularly from the school district's point of view.*

School districts that participate in teacher residency programs like CT-TRP's share compelling evidence for why their school district participates in the program. Many school districts in CT have a school board goal or strategic plan goal focused on diversifying the workforce. They acknowledge and understand the importance of diversifying staff to reflect the diversity of their students. School districts participating in TRP say they could not realize that goal without participating in the program because the traditional teacher preparation pathways are not producing a diverse teacher workforce and existing teacher recruitment strategies, like career fairs that everyone attends, are not working. Several school districts we spoke with suggested that the program provides an on-ramp for substitute teachers and paraprofessionals which is lacking in the state. Furthermore, school district narratives about participation in CT-TRP can provide concrete examples about how school districts fund participation in the program. For example, one school district administrator said that school districts can make the financial aspect of the program work if it is a priority. This particular school district funded their contribution to the program through Title I funds and said that strategy protected the

program in case the board or community ever came back and wanted to cut it—if the program were funded through the operating budget or was included as an FTE, it could easily be cut.

Recommendation 2. *The state should establish a high-quality definition for teacher residencies in state policy.*

Currently, the “definition” of teacher residency in Connecticut is language in statute from the previously discussed “minority candidate retention, certification, or residency program.” The language states that a residency program is, “*a certification program approved by the State Board of Education that requires participants to complete a residency in which such participants serve (A) in a position otherwise requiring professional certification, and (B) in a full-time position for ten school months at a local or regional board of education in the state under the supervision of (i) a certified administrator or teacher, and (ii) a supervisor from the regional educational service center or private, nonprofit teacher or administrator operating such certification program.*”⁹ Further regulatory guidance to elaborate on this statutory definition has not emerged from CSDE. Therefore, there is significant room to improve upon this definition in legislation. The state currently has approximately six teacher residency programs, such as CT-TRP, the [Sacred Heart University Teacher Residency Program](#), and [Relay Graduate School’s Master of Arts in Teaching Programs](#); but, even among these programs there is variation in design and implementation of residency-based teacher preparation. Furthermore, some interviewees commented that the lack of a definition or more clear guidelines around what a successful teacher residency program looks like, while still remaining flexible to local context, has created some confusion amongst school districts and teacher preparation programs when implementing the program outlined in the statute. For example, the policy language does not state that teacher residents should not be teachers of record during their teacher residency experience; it does not articulate the importance of a partnership between a teacher preparation program and local school district that supports the interconnectedness between the candidate’s coursework and in-classroom experiences; and it has little information about the recruitment, selection, and support of mentor teachers. More comprehensive, clear, and research-based language in policy can facilitate the design and development of high quality programs and lay the foundation for further policy improvements over time. NCTR has done this work with many state education agencies over the years and consistently recommends defining, at minimum, teacher resident; teacher residency; and mentor to

⁹ Minority candidate certification, retention or residency year program. Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 10-156gg. Connecticut General Assembly. Retrieved at: https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_166.htm

ensure that teacher residency programs offer consistent, high-quality experiences for aspiring teachers. States that have definitions of teacher residencies in policy that helps to guide the state's work and scale of high-quality, equitable teacher residencies, include [New Mexico](#), [Texas \(introduced version\)](#), and [New York](#).

Additionally, in 2022, NCTR co-led a working group as part of the [Pathways Alliance coalition](#) to develop a definition of teacher residency programs that could be used by policymakers to guide policies that can support high-quality residencies to attract, prepare, and retain a robust and diverse teaching workforce (Pathways Alliance, 2022). The definition focuses on partnership, pre-service curriculum, mentorship, and resident experiences.

Recommendation 3. CT-TRP, the state, and districts should consider how to improve racial and ethnic diversity among mentor teachers, engaging districts and schools in how to support selection and professional development of mentor teachers, and clarifying communications about roles and expectations of mentor teachers.

The framework for and implementation of CT-TRP's mentoring model is strong, however, there are several areas to consider for improvement, including increasing the number of diverse mentors; strengthening engagement with partner schools and districts around the selection and training of mentors; and improving mentor job support related to communication and clarity of roles and responsibilities. Not only should these recommendations be considered for the improvement of CT-TRP, but they are also germane to the work of school districts and should be considered by state policymakers.

- ***Increase the number of diverse and culturally and linguistically responsive mentors in CT-TRP and across the state more generally.*** Mentors are essential to the success of the program, and to new teacher support generally; but, there is not enough diversity among mentors. Additionally, there is a shortage of mentors who are culturally and linguistically responsive. This is particularly important given the high number of teacher residents of color. In an analysis of teacher residents and their paired mentors, teacher residents of color who share a race and ethnicity with their mentor were more satisfied with their programs. Additionally, when paired with a mentor of the same race and ethnicity, teacher residents of color were rated as more prepared by their mentors (Levay & Scheib, 2022). The CT-TRP program does have cross-cultural mentor competencies that are used to guide the recruitment, selection, and support of mentors. Program leaders state that, "These competencies help mentors understand common patterns in cross-cultural relations, acknowledge the importance of culture, maintain vigilance

in recognizing the dynamics that result from cultural differences, expand their cultural knowledge, and increase their capacity to make adjustments to meet the cultural needs of their residents (Sims et al., 2023).” Nevertheless, this remains an area of continuous improvement for the program and should be considered for other school districts and the state as a whole, such as building out explicit programs to train and cultivate teacher leaders and mentors of color and providing mentors with culturally responsive and related training and professional development.

- ***CT-TRP should strengthen engagement with partner schools and school districts around the selection and training of mentors.*** Strategic recruitment, selection, and training of mentors as well as mentor matching strongly emerged as an area on which the program should continue to focus. There appears to be some variation in how mentors are selected across the partner school districts and as the program has grown, more capacity is needed to support the mentor-teacher resident relationship. For example, interviewees suggested establishing liaisons between the school districts, schools, and CT-TRP; better assessment and understanding school districts’ capacity related to mentor recruitment, selection, and training; developing tighter program mentor selection criteria; and offering additional mentor training and touchpoints. In interviews and focus groups, participants gave the impression that the principals’ involvement in the routine relationship between mentors and teacher residents is not always active and varies quite a bit. Effective face to face interactions, accessible coaching, and support from CT-TRP were all seen as positive; however CT-TRP should consider how to encourage and support better responsiveness and ongoing, effective communication for principals hosting teacher residents in their schools.
- ***CT-TRP should improve communication and clarity of roles and responsibilities between program and mentors as well as general work load for mentors.*** Data from this evaluation suggests that mentors have a demanding workload and often feel “underwater.” Additionally, they need more consistent communication and clarity around their role as mentors to teacher residents. Mentors say they often do not have time to do their work and that they may need to be released from other responsibilities to create time to focus on mentoring duties. Additionally, mentors expressed the need for more frequent and better access to program staff. As CT-TRP grows, mentors and principals have suggested having program coaches for each area of the state. Last, mentors consistently noted clarity of

expectations and communications as areas for improvement, suggesting the program err on the side of more rather than less information to mentors, particularly around what teacher residents are experiencing in their coursework scope and sequence, and working more closely with the school district and schools to ensure coherence for mentors' experiences between the school/district and the program.

- ***The state and local school districts should examine CT-TRP's mentoring model and programming and apply best practices to the locally-implemented state model.*** CT-TRP has done substantial work to build out and continuously improve the mentoring component of their program. The CT-TRP mentoring handbook and corresponding support includes extensive mentor expectations and guidance; including those around co-teaching and gradual release of responsibilities; observation and feedback; and supporting candidates in preparing for certification exams. The handbook also lists mentor competencies, including professional, coaching, and cultural competencies—mentors are given a pre-assessment in these areas that sets the stage for further growth throughout the program. Mentors also engage in regular and ongoing training and professional development opportunities with the program.

The state has a different new teacher mentoring and induction framework that districts have the flexibility to develop and implement.¹⁰ Connecticut's Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) Program is a legislatively mandated teacher induction program for all beginning teachers. School districts assign each beginning teacher a mentor who has at least a provisional level education certificate, has completed the TEAM Program Initial Support Teacher Training, and has taught for at least three years, including one year in the district in which he or she is mentoring. The TEAM Program Initial Support Teacher Training for the mentor teacher is a three-day training and the focus depends on the beginning teacher's area of certification and teaching assignment. Mentor teachers are required to complete up to five modules which are focused on the following domains of the Common Core of Teaching (CCT): Classroom environment, Planning, Instruction, Assessment, Professional responsibility (TEAM Program, 2023). Mentor teachers are required to provide a minimum of 50 mentoring hours over two years. Mentor Online Update Training is a three-hour online training for

¹⁰ Section 10-145o of the Connecticut General Statutes was passed in October 2009 and called for the establishment of "a teacher education and mentoring (TEAM) program that includes guided teacher support and coaching and the completion of instructional modules" for beginning teachers.

mentors who have previously participated in a TEAM Initial Support Teacher Training or TEAM Mentor Update Training. Legislation requires that mentor teachers be updated every three years. There is no publicly available information about the effectiveness of the mentor training feature of the TEAM Program.

The state should consider examining and applying aspects of the CT-TRP mentoring model to the Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) Program, such as CT-TRP's deep focus on cross-cultural mentoring competencies; CT-TRP's process for frequent and targeted touchpoints and support between mentors and candidates/new teachers; and CT-TRP's guidance and resources for mentor teachers on observation and feedback, coaching, and modeling and articulating instructional practice.

Recommendation 4. Other teacher preparation programs should consider ways of making teacher preparation more financially accessible and supporting candidates with the certification and licensure process. The state should consider ways of making teacher preparation more financially accessible, including increasing and sustaining investments in teacher residency programs like CT-TRP, examining teacher certification and licensure exam requirements, and supporting candidates with the certification and licensure process.

Teacher residencies like CT-TRP address a pressing and persistent challenge to growing an effective, diverse teacher workforce—they make teacher preparation and entry into the teaching profession more accessible for a wider range of individuals, such as paraprofessionals and instructional assistants, career changers, substitute teachers, and other professionals who have classroom experience. Two specific ways CT-TRP addresses this accessibility issue emerging from this report that should continue to be a focus and that other teacher preparation programs and the state should consider are financial accessibility and support with certification and licensure exams.

- ***Sustain financial accessibility of CT-TRP and invest in teacher residencies more broadly.*** School district administrators, principals, and teacher residents acknowledged that CT-TRP lowered barriers to entry for teacher candidates and many stated that they would not be able to start or complete the program without the financial support. As previously discussed, because cost is a significant barrier for many to enter the teaching profession, particularly candidates of color who are historically marginalized, CT-TRP was designed to be a zero-cost tuition model that paid residents for their work in schools and covered books and some certification exam fees. Evidence shows this has been essential for the

recruitment and retention of candidates. CT-TRP should sustain this kind of financial support for candidates by braiding and blending funds and pursuing the following strategies:

- Advocating for recurring state funding.
- Learning about and applying for registered apprenticeship program funding by: having a “seat at the table” as the state designs standards for registered teacher apprenticeship programs; partnering or applying to become an Eligible Training Provider (ETP); working to ensure that K-12 teaching is prioritized as an occupation for the state’s apprenticeship funds; monitoring state and federal workforce development grant opportunities; and reviewing the program against the state’s registered apprenticeship requirements and the [National Guidelines for Apprenticeship Standards for K-12 Teachers \(NGS\)](#).
- Promoting conversations with RESCs and school districts about the need to continuously invest protected funds for teacher residents (for example, federal funding or state funding that is recurring) and the return on investment of participating in the program.

Additionally, the state should invest recurring funds to support the growth and scale of teacher residency programs as an evidence-based strategy for recruiting and retaining a diverse educator workforce. As previously discussed, some state funds have been made available for CT-TRP but these have been one-time allocations. Several states currently invest state funds to support teacher residencies, including [California](#), [Pennsylvania](#), and [New Mexico](#).

- ***Examine teacher certification and licensure exam requirements and provide support around teacher certification and licensure exams.*** Evidence suggests that paying for and passing teacher licensure assessments is a barrier to the teaching profession for many, particularly candidates of color. In fact, it is a documented impediment among NCTR’s Black Educators Initiative (BEI) grantees (Rowland et al., 2023). School district administrators, principals, and teacher residents for this evaluation shared that they believe there are too many assessments; the assessments are not tightly connected with the realities of the job of teaching; and that preparing for and passing them is unduly stressful, expensive, and time intensive, particularly in an accelerated program. All of these reasons, many of which are documented in the literature on the accessibility of the profession, support the need for the previously discussed certification and licensure system overhaul that the state has just launched. Barring changes to policies related to the certification and licensure exam system, CT-TRP aims to

mitigate this challenge in ways that other teacher preparation programs and the state should consider, such as providing financial resources for some assessments (e.g., Praxis II, Foundations of Reading, and edTPA) and embedding test preparation support into the structure of the program. For example, CT-TRP requires a Praxis pre-test during admission and uses the results of this and subsequent diagnostics to guide decisions about support and supplemental instruction in the core courses, to develop study groups during cohort meetings, and to provide specialized tutoring and assessment preparation sessions (Sims et al., 2023).

Recommendation 5. CT-TRP and other preparation programs should persist in employing and strengthening additional research-based strategies, such as providing holistic supports to teacher residents; centering cultural competency throughout the program; and providing extended supports and guidance after the resident graduates.

CT-TRP results in diversifying the workforce are undeniable - the program is successful at recruiting, enrolling, graduating, and retaining educators of color and closing the gap between race and ethnicity of teachers and students in partner districts and charter schools. Part of their success is a result of the accessibility of the program which is discussed in Recommendation 4 and part of the success is due to the result of the program's mentoring model, discussed in Recommendation 3.

To continue achieving as well as scaling outcomes related to diversifying the workforce, CT-TRP should continue employing and strengthening additional research-based strategies, such as providing holistic supports to residents; centering cultural competency throughout the program; and providing extended supports and guidance after the resident graduates. Other teacher residency and preparation programs should examine, apply, and institute these strategies as well.

Teacher residents and graduates, particularly those of color, expressed the importance of CT-TRP's multi-dimensional support system. This system includes social and mental support in addition to academic support. Additionally, CT-TRP's mission to embed equity and cultural competency throughout the program and its extended supports following the teacher residency year experience are all essential to recruitment into the program as well as retention throughout the program and beyond. For example, CT-TRP partner school districts and principals complete an equity self-assessment and participate in training opportunities and regular check-ins that focus on anti-bias and anti-racist practices, aiming to create inclusive environments and find ways to support CT-TRP teacher candidates. To support candidates during their first year following the teacher

residency, CT-TRP provides each candidate a sponsor teacher. The sponsor teacher has a non-evaluative mentorship role that includes providing psychological safety, offering assistance in implementing best practices, and encouraging ongoing professional and personal growth (Sims et al., 2023). In addition to a sponsor teacher, the CT-TRP also offers professional development and social opportunities for teacher residents in their first three years of teaching to meet, network, and share best practices and experiences. For example, monthly affinity group meetings provide a safe space for teacher residents of color to come together, share their experiences, and discuss important topics (Sims et al., 2023).

Conclusion

NCTR's evaluation of the CT-TRP indicates that the program is achieving its mission to recruit, prepare, and retain teachers of color and diversify the state's teacher workforce. The evaluation also identifies areas for continuous improvement for the CT-TRP, something that CT-TRP's leadership has been committed to since its inception in 2019. Finally, data collected and reviewed for this evaluation suggest several key recommendations for not only CT-TRP but also the state and other teacher residency and teacher preparation programs across the state of Connecticut.

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