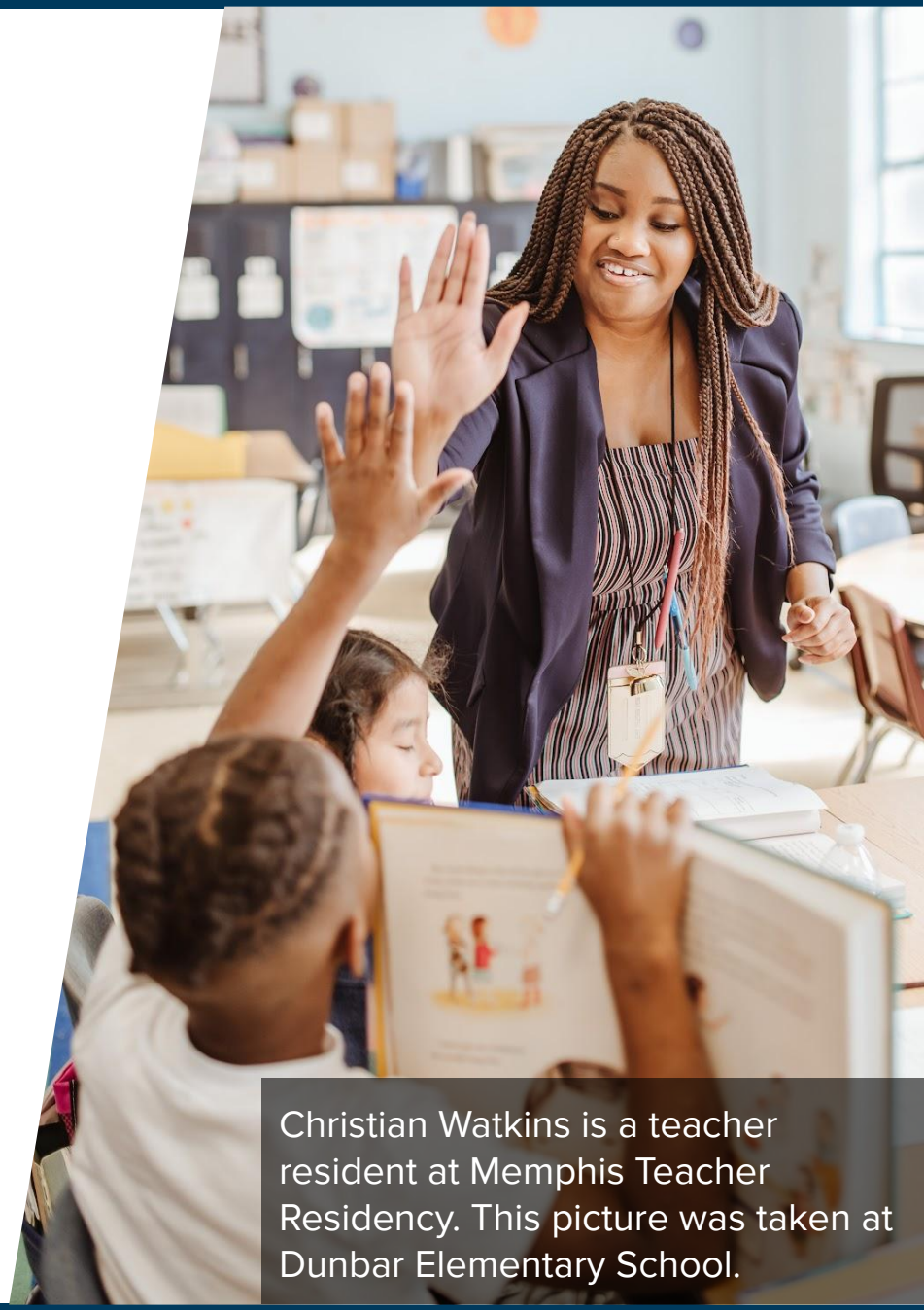
NATIONAL CENTER FOR TEACHER RESIDENCIES

BEI

Building the Conditions: Retention Insights from BEI

November 5, 2026



Christian Watkins is a teacher resident at Memphis Teacher Residency. This picture was taken at Dunbar Elementary School.

Presenters



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Acknowledgements

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Agenda

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2. Why Retention Matters
3. Retention Study
4. Key Preparation-Related Factors Impacting Retention
5. Implications for Educator Pipelines
6. Strategies
7. Q & A /Next Steps

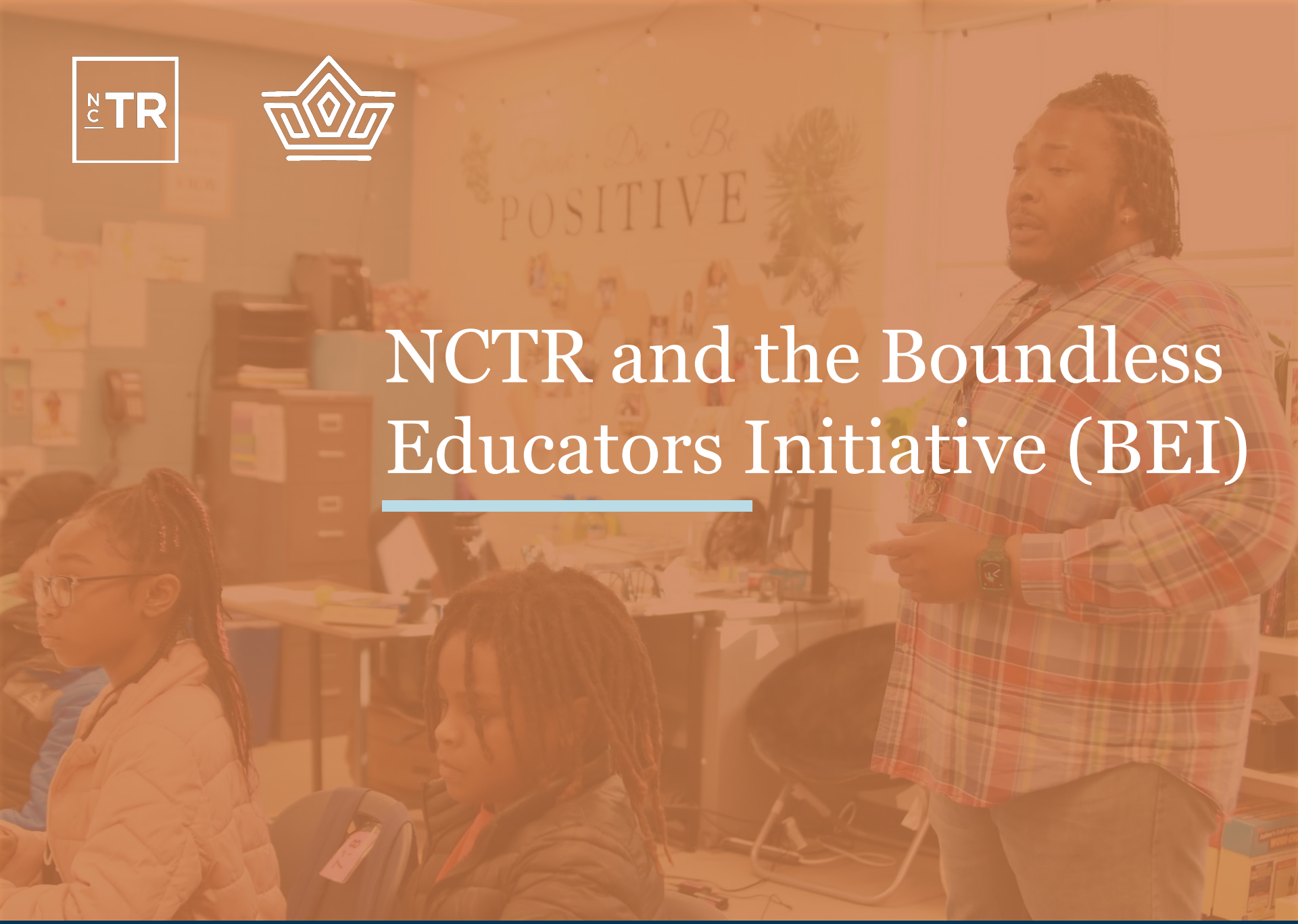


Mikayla Curry is a teacher resident at Project Inspire. This picture was taken at The Howard School.

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While NCTR operates under federal law, we recognize state laws may differ for you; please refer to your state law for guidance.



NCTR and the Boundless Educators Initiative (BEI)

MISSION

Our mission is to transform educator preparation by advancing the teacher residency movement to prepare, support, and retain more effective educators who represent and value the communities they serve.

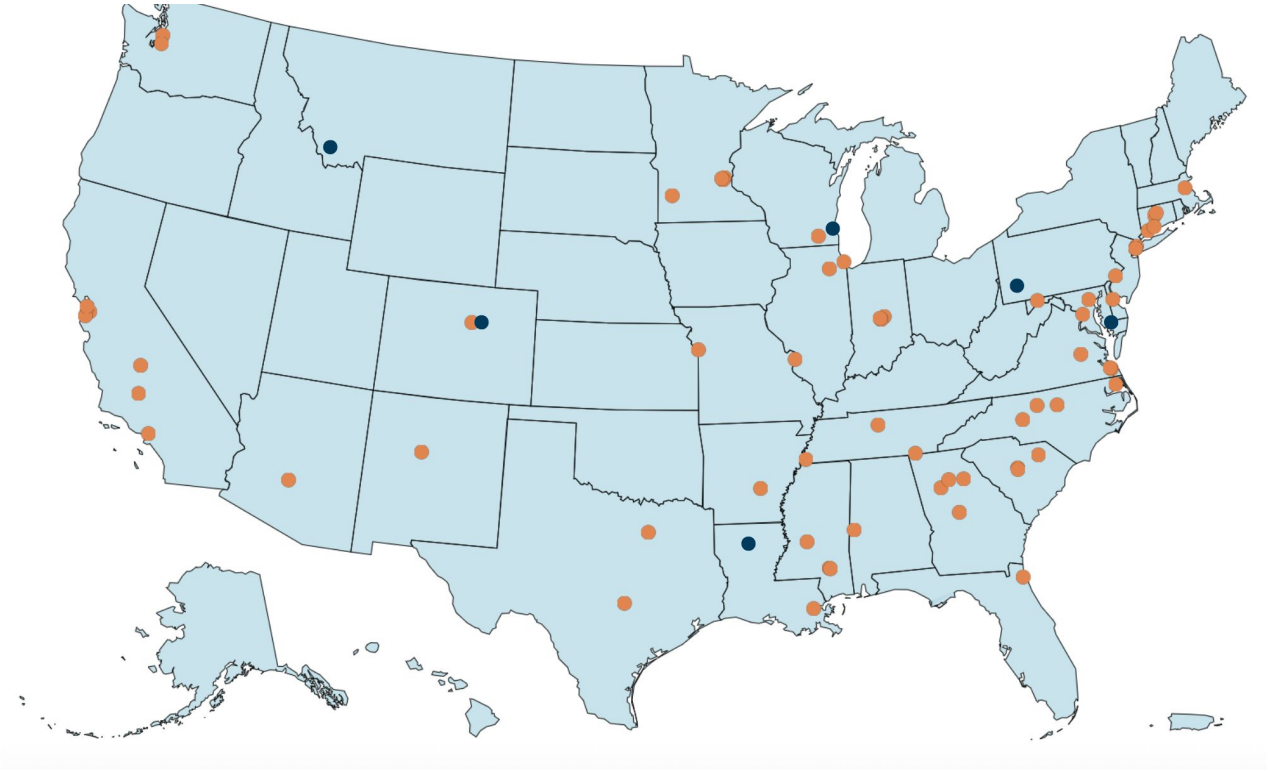
What We Do at NCTR

Build & Launch

Develop new teacher residencies and apprenticeship programs

Scale & Improve

Membership for teacher residency programs; receive consulting, community learning experiences, access to data, and attend a site visit



Measure

Evaluate and report on the impact of teacher residencies

Federal & State Policy

Engage SEAs, LEAs, and relevant stakeholders to improve teacher preparation policies and practices across the state

Key

NCTR Network programs

NCTR Design Academy programs

Our Impact in 2025-2026

Preparing and ensuring students from historically underserved communities have access to effective educators.



86%

of **teacher residents and apprentices** report being prepared or **very well prepared** to serve as a teacher of record



94%

of **principals** report that graduates of programs in NCTR's Network are **more effective than a typical new teacher**



993

of 2024-2025 teacher residents and apprentices were **hired and began teaching in a Title I school**

Strengthening Our Impact Since 2007

35	States NCTR has supported or helped launch programs
175+	Programs NCTR has supported or helped launch
3,700+	Teachers prepared by Boundless Educators Initiative (BEI) grantee programs
16,700+	Teachers prepared by programs in the NCTR Network
2.2 Million +	Students taught by graduates of programs currently or previously in NCTR's Network

About BEI

Launched in 2019, **NCTR's Boundless Educators Initiative (BEI)** began as a five-year initiative to help NCTR Network teacher residency programs improve the recruitment, preparation, and retention of educators, with the ultimate goal of improving student outcomes. To date, BEI has prepared **3,739 teacher residents and apprentices** toward becoming educators and **awarded $29.4 million** to support programs.

BEI is doubling our efforts with the goal of developing **2,400 new teachers** over five years who represent and value the communities they serve, with a particular focus on the retention of BEI graduates.

BEI Impact for 2025-2026

47

grantees



792

newly enrolled teacher residents and apprentices received direct financial support through NCTR's BEI

$6M

awarded to design and/or support 55 programs

Boundless Educators Initiative

Phase 1 (2019–2024)

Impact
1,700+ teacher residents supported on their journey to the classroom

Recruitment
Larger, more diverse cohorts through intentional, targeted strategies

Preparation
Residents learned skills to teach in ways that honor students' identities, foster reflection, and build connections; received mentor support

Retention
Higher graduation and hiring rates, showing the long-term value of targeted support

Phase 2 (2024–2029)

Goal
Place an estimated 2,400 teachers from historically underserved communities nationwide.

Commitment
Deepening our mission to support and empower teacher residents who reflect their communities.

Focus
Strengthen retention to shape a profession where educators thrive, inspire change, and shape the future.

Two Pathways
Cultivating and launching 10 new teacher residencies across the South, while supporting existing programs.

How BEI Works

Financial Investments

Individualized Consulting

Programming

How BEI Works (Cont'd)

BEI Investments at a Glance

Scholarships, stipends, & incentive funds for residents' full yearlong experience.

Consulting & training support for mentor teachers of teacher residents.

Increased induction support, job search, alumni networks, & graduate PD.

Memberships to professional development & networking organizations.

Increased mentor stipends to attract experienced, effective mentor teachers.

Mental health supports for educators and teacher candidates.



Why Retention Matters

Why Retention Matters

The Cost of Attrition

Teacher retention impacts:

- Student Learning
- School Culture
- Public Investment

$25,000

Replacement Cost

Average cost to replace a single urban school teacher

Current National Context:

15.1%

Turnover Rate

National public school teacher turnover rate

74%

Voluntary Departure

Of exiting teachers leave voluntarily before retirement



Ashley Love is a teacher resident at Philadelphia Teacher Residency. This picture was taken at Boys Latin Charter School.

Why Retention Matters

The Human Impact

Student Learning & Morale

Teacher retention directly affects learning quality, school stability, and staff morale.

Loss of Experience

Departing teachers cost students consistency and strip schools of institutional knowledge.

Workload & Burnout

High turnover creates severe stress and extra workload for remaining educators.

Systemic & Economic Costs

Financial Drain

Districts waste significant time and money replacing teachers instead of supporting growth.

Compounded Inequity

Turnover is highest in under-resourced schools, worsening educational disparities.

Workforce Instability

High attrition makes building stable, experienced, and diverse workforces difficult.



Retention Study

Retention Study

Centering the Graduate Teaching Experience

Purpose

Understand Impact of BEI-supported Resident and Apprenticeship Programs

How do programs impact ability to enter and continue teaching?

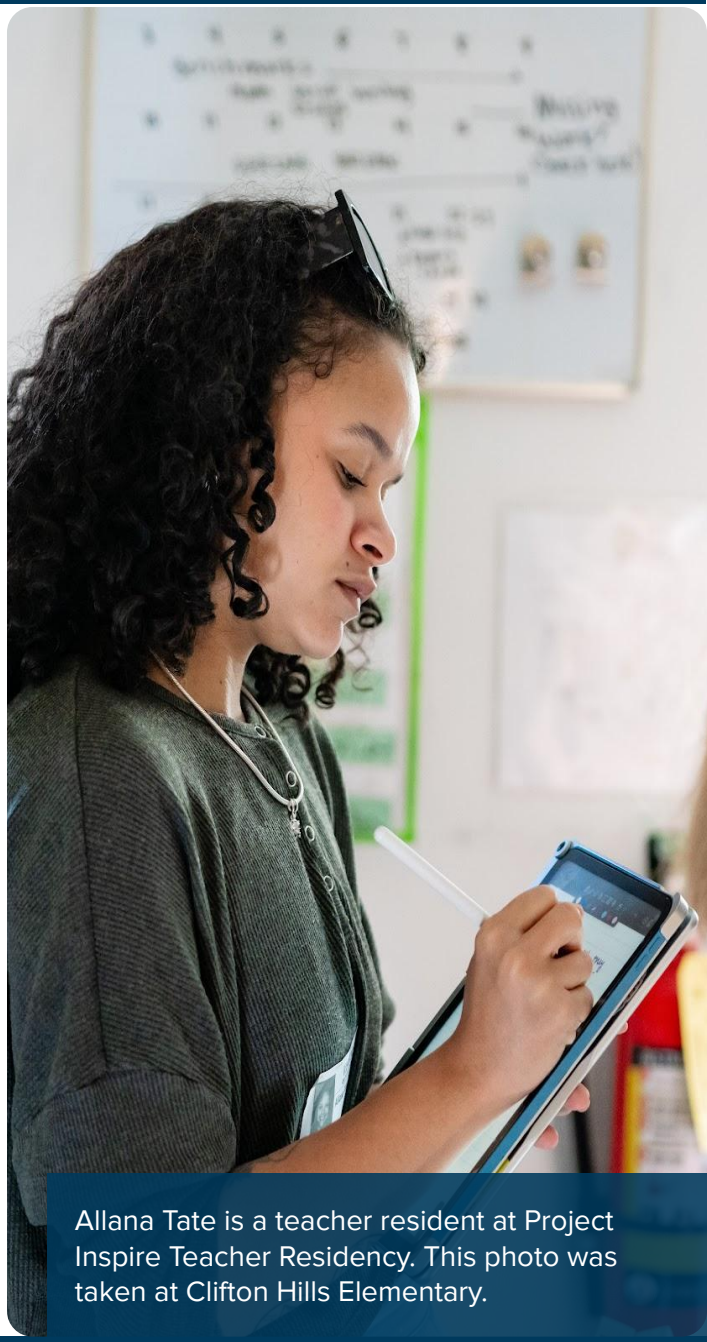
Center Educator Voices

What do educators say has supported them?

Key Questions

Why have graduates of BEI-supported programs decided to continue teaching?

What role have factors related to graduates' preparation experience and process of becoming a teacher played in their continuing to teach?



Allana Tate is a teacher resident at Project Inspire Teacher Residency. This photo was taken at Clifton Hills Elementary.

About the Study

11 Focus Groups

- Conducted virtually in fall 2025.
- ~2-5 participants per group
- Participants participated with those from other programs

40 Participants

- 95% currently teaching at time of focus group
- 68% began teaching in 2023-24 or earlier
- 70% teaching in initial hiring district/CMO

13 BEI-supported programs

- Located in 8 states across Midwest, Northeast, & South
- 31% licensure-only
- 69% average annual enrollment of 20 or more residents/apprentices
- 69% enrolled first cohort 8 or more years ago (i.e. program age of 8 or more years)



Findings:

Key Preparation-Related Factors Impacting Retention

Cost & Extent of Financial Support Provided

What We Heard

Financial barriers and stress were significant factors in candidates' decisions to pursue teaching.

Participants attributed entry and completion of their programs to a range of financial support, including living stipends, tuition support, funding for essential technology (e.g. textbooks, computers), funding for licensure preparation and exams, funding to cover unexpected expenses, and funding for ongoing professional learning and credentialing opportunities.

Financial support made program entry and completion possible by helping meet essential needs, reducing stress, and preventing need to take on additional paid work

Financial support also connected to persistence in profession by enhancing later economic well-being and more resources to pursue professional learning opportunities as a teacher.

Cost & Extent of Financial Support Provided

I wouldn't have taken out another degree. … I already had a bunch of student loans. … The financial support made it possible for me to move from the assistant role to being a teacher.

[The grants and stipends] allowed me to stay and live in the city I work in. … It allowed me to be a part of the community and to stay here.

Financially speaking, I'm more stable and grounded. … I see how this could be a long-term career.

Quality & Alignment of Clinical Experience with Teaching Position

What We Heard

Centrality and length of clinical preparation experience was essential.

Clinical experience provided realistic expectations, practical skills, and valuable relationships.

Preparation and hiring in schools with strong professional collaboration and support, and that have similar demographics and resources supports retention.

Alignment in school demographics and resources provides better understanding of, and experience with assets and challenges.

Being hired in same school of clinical experience strengthens sense of belonging and commitment to teaching, and means that candidates are already more familiar with the culture, staff, and students.

Quality & Alignment of Clinical Experience with Teaching Position

They had already placed us in 'hard-to-fill' schools and we had a clinical instructor the entire time. … So I felt very well prepared to step inside a classroom. … As far as knowing what was to come and experiencing it, I felt like they prepared us very well because we were already in similar environments.

I have been fortunate enough that my school where I student-taught had a position that opened up. … I think having the whole year in the school and seeing the entire cycle of the school year made is so that it wasn't as harsh of a transition. …I think by being there and having to take over a whole unit by the end really helped.

Ongoing Program Relationships & Support

What We Heard

Ongoing professional support and relationships formed through preparation program helped participants adjust and continue teaching.

Other candidates and graduates, mentors, and program staff continue serve as trusted sources of feedback, social and emotional support, and professional learning during preparation and early years of teaching.

Formal and informal relationship-based forms of support help to reduce isolation and burnout.

Participants shared that ongoing coaching and check-ins with mentors and program staff, and organized gatherings with other graduates.

Ongoing Program Relationships & Support

My cohort, we all talk and we talk about different ways in which we get our students to learn things. Oftentimes you run into things, and you've exhausted all your resources, and other people can help. … That's one of the things that's kept me as a teacher.

We're new educators in the field. And sharing the strategies, and just kind of talking about the things happening… that's really been very instrumental in me staying in. And it's also like having that 'knowing' that there are people that I can reach out to if I feel like I'm stuck somewhere and I need support. … Having that support system for me is one of the biggest things.

Support for Licensure Exams

What We Heard

Licensure exams created financial, emotional, and logistical stress for participants.

Exam-related barriers sometimes delayed licensure, and negatively affected self-esteem and motivation to complete program or continue teaching.

Participants identified both financial and socioemotional support for licensure exams as critical to their success and persistence.

Funds and vouchers, tutoring, coursework, and opportunities to meet with other candidates and graduates helped them pass exams, as well as feel more confident and prepared, and better financially positioned to continue teaching.

Support for Licensure Exams

They gave us vouchers. … They even provided us with the books that we needed to study. The university also had study groups. … All of us passed our test and I think we were one of the largest groups at that time to be a part of it.

I graduated but the Praxis test was still something I had to cross over. … The program came in and helped to pay. … They sponsored me and I passed this year. And that kind of gave me courage, because if not for them, I would have given up.

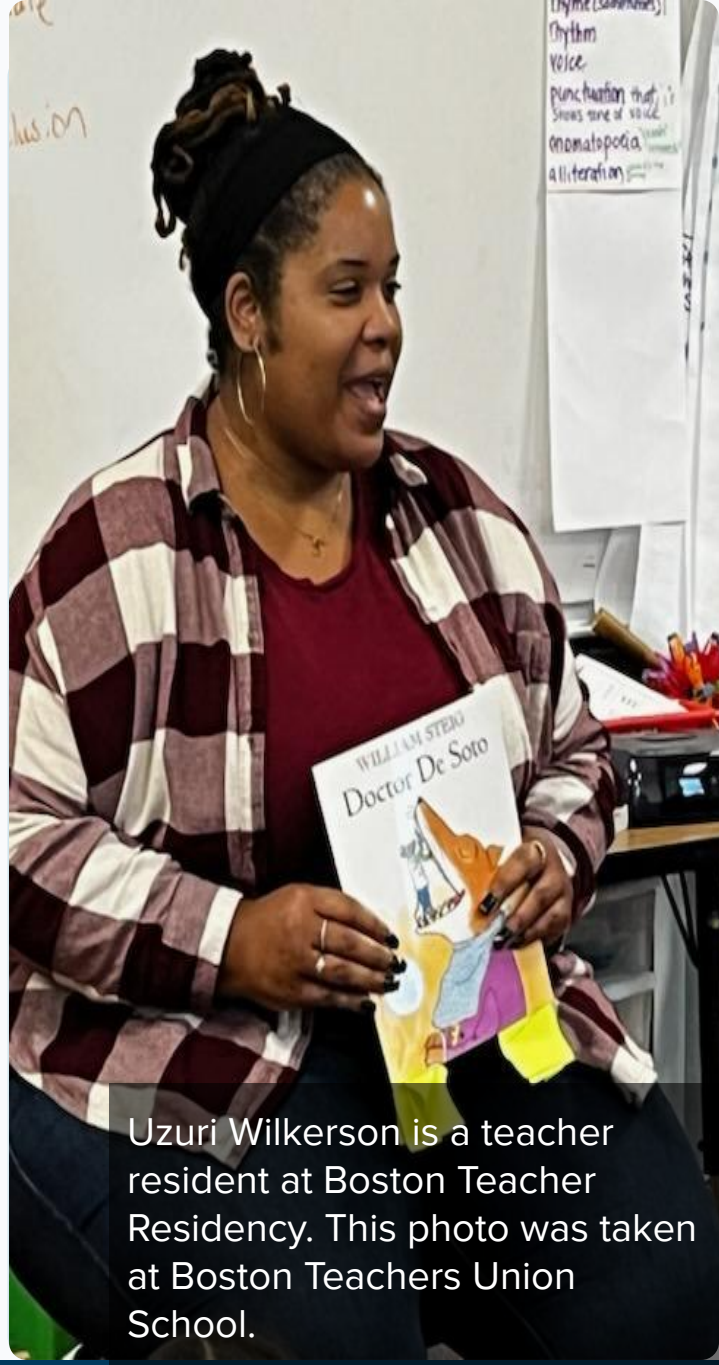


Recommendations

Implications for Educator Pipelines

Retention is a Continuum

- Educators experience preparation, licensure, induction, and workplace support as interconnected
- Retention is influenced by more than one program, intervention, or support
- Financial support, mentoring, relationships, school culture, and induction all shape whether educators remain in the profession
- Gaps between systems can create additional stress and instability during key transition points
- Long-term sustainability requires stronger continuity and coordination across the educator pipeline



Uzuri Wilkerson is a teacher resident at Boston Teacher Residency. This photo was taken at Boston Teachers Union School.

Make the Path into Teaching Financially Accessible & Easier to Navigate

PRACTICE

Provide Financial and Emergency Supports

Distribute direct pay, stipends, or scholarships, and establish dedicated "emergency funds" to alleviate unexpected financial shocks during the residency year.

Embed Licensure Exam Wraparound Supports

Cover exam costs, supply study materials, and integrate academic tutoring and exam preparation directly into program coursework.

POLICY

Scale Registered Apprenticeships and Residency Funding

Expand state Title II and federal workforce innovation funds to sustain earn-while-you-learn models, covering resident stipends, mentor teacher compensation, and tuition subsidies.

Audit Standardized Licensure Barriers

Re-evaluate cut scores and systemic biases inherent in standardized licensure exams, ensuring state licensing policies do not disproportionately exclude qualified educators.

Subsidize Exam Retakes and Offer Alternative Measures

Provide vouchers for multiple licensure attempts and build performance-based portfolio options as alternative pathways to full certification.

Strengthen Mentoring and the Quality of the Clinical Experience

PRACTICE

Foster Supportive School Cultures

Partner with school leaders to establish positive environments that offer regular check-ins, stable leadership, and culturally affirming workspaces

Consider Mentor Placement

Intentionally match residents with mentors who share similar identities and experiences to foster belonging and professional identity development.

Provide High-Quality Clinical Placements

Ensure candidates complete an immersive, full-year residency experience alongside skilled mentor teachers in authentic classroom environments.

POLICY

Fund Sustainable Mentor Compensation

Allocate state and district funding to provide competitive stipends and career-ladder incentives for experienced mentor teachers

Institutionalize District-Residency Retention Partnerships

Incentivize districts to partner with residency programs to improve working conditions, ensure competitive starting salaries, and build retention-focused administrative practices.

Build Lasting Professional Relationships & A Sense of Belonging

PRACTICE

Sustain Cohort Connection

Allocate dedicated space, funding, or virtual platforms to enable alumni cohorts to maintain active communication and collaborative problem-solving post-graduation.

Facilitate Affinity Groups

Host structured spaces for teacher residents and graduates to reflect on shared experiences, combat isolation, and build socioemotional resilience.

Fund Dedicated Graduate Support Staff

Hire full-time equivalent (FTE) personnel specifically assigned to lead graduate induction, organize alumni events, and coordinate post-residency outreach.

POLICY

Sustain Investments That Expand Access to the Educator Pipeline

Philanthropic partners and agencies should continue multi-year grant investments in supports shown to strengthen educator preparation and retention, including community-building spaces, graduate support infrastructure, and dedicated retention-focused staffing.

Design a Stronger Transition from Preparation into Teaching

PRACTICE

Recruit Candidates with High-Retention Profiles

Prioritize recruitment of local community members, paraprofessionals, SECAs, district alumni, and parents who demonstrate long-term commitment.

Facilitate "Best-Fit" School Placements

Provide resume guidance, interview preparation, and partner with districts to grant teacher residencies "first-look" hiring prioritization.

Provide Multi-Year Instructional Coaching

Dedicate instructional coaching resources to graduates in their classrooms during their first one to three years as lead teachers of record.

POLICY

Fund Dedicated Post-Residency Coaching

State departments and district partners should co-fund structured multi-year induction and coaching programs that bridge the gap between graduation and full-time teaching autonomy.

Invest in Graduates as Learners, Leaders, and Partners

PRACTICE

Develop Graduate Mentors and Classroom Hosts

Train alumni to serve as mentors for new residents, establish formal graduate-resident peer pairings, and open graduate classrooms for resident peer observations.

Host Alumni-Led Conferences

Organize localized conferences where graduates can present, attend professional learning sessions, and extend their professional networks.

Provide Individualized Professional Development Funding

Create competitive application processes or stipends for graduates to access external professional development aligned with their individual growth goals.

POLICY

Support Career Pathways for Educator-Leaders

Establish policies and grant mechanisms that allow early-career teachers to take on leadership roles—such as mentorship, curriculum design, and peer coaching—without having to leave the classroom.

Use Graduate Experience and Outcomes to Continuously Improve Preparation and Retention Strategies

PRACTICE

Offer Leadership Paths Through Alumni Councils and Selection

Establish Alumni Advisory Councils to inform program design and recruit graduates to co-host information sessions, facilitate group selection processes, and interview incoming candidates.

Deliver District-Wide Professional Learning

Partner higher education faculty with partner schools to deliver school-wide professional development, improve overall school culture, create mentor pipelines, and establish alternative program revenue streams.

POLICY

Align Data Systems Across Institutions

Invest in state and district data systems that track graduate retention, effectiveness, and career trajectories over the long term to continuously inform and refine educator preparation and policy decisions.



Q&A

THANK YOU!

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