Supporting the Arkansas Department of Education in Understanding the Characteristics of Effective Statewide Teacher Residency/Apprenticeship Programs

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Abstract

We partnered with the Arkansas Department of Education to investigate contexts around teacher preparation programs and their ability to implement a statewide residency model in accordance with the requirements of the Arkansas LEARNS Act. This is a qualitative study with focus groups, interviews, and a questionnaire surrounding contextual factors that may impact a situated implementation of this new policy. Overall, findings suggest that clarity and definition of terms, the ability to support residents financially, and providing explicit guidance and procedures to residents, mentors, district partners, and institutions of higher education are necessary steps.

Key terms: teacher preparation, teacher residency, state education policy, situated implementation, Arkansas

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Organizational Context

The Arkansas Department of Education is a state-based educational support division of the government of the state of Arkansas. As such, the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) serves the entire state of Arkansas and oversees the state's public school system and outcomes. To serve all the families of Arkansas, the ADE employs staff to support the operations of 1056 K-12 public schools across 259 school districts, 22 charter schools, and 15 education service cooperatives throughout the state (Arkansas Department of Education, n.d.). Based in Little Rock, Arkansas, the ADE operates the following divisions:

- Division of Elementary and Secondary Schools

- Department of Career and Technical Education

- Department of Higher Education

- The Arkansas State Library

- The Arkansas Schools for the Blind and the Deaf

- The Arkansas Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission and Board

The mission of the Arkansas Department of Education is "*Every Arkansan is equitably prepared, supported, and inspired to succeed in school, career, community, and life.*" As part of this commitment to the 476,579 K-12 enrolled students in the state, the Arkansas Department of Education has outlined a strategic plan with goals based on strategic focus areas. These focus areas support the mission by focusing on the achievement and preparedness of each student in the state and outline prioritized benchmarks to help their success.

To achieve these goals, the Arkansas Department of Education, like most states, has struggled with the teacher pipeline (the supply of educators entering the field as new teachers), specifically in underserved areas and in discrete areas of teaching such as mathematics, science, and special education (Dee & Goldhaber, 2017). Arkansas school districts have more vacancies than available teachers to serve their students. For the 2022-2023 school year, there were 32,666 certified teachers, 11,546 certified staff (including social workers, counselors, and other professional staff), and 29,817 support staff (including paraeducators, food service workers, bus drivers, custodial maintenance workers, and other support staff) across the state to serve their 476,579 students (Arkansas Department of Education, n.d.). Currently, the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education is engaging in reflective practices around teacher recruitment, attraction, and retention to help alleviate some of these stressors for local districts and divisions. Along with traditional pathways, the ADE is actively creating

programs to allow non-traditional teaching candidates the ability to attain and then maintain a valid teaching certification through a path other than a bachelor's degree, as well as looking for ways to identify and support high school students and current paraeducators who may have aspirations to become teachers.

In March 2023, the Arkansas Governor, Sarah Huckabee Sanders, signed an amendment to the Arkansas LEARNS Act into law. This 144-page policy change will impact Arkansas schools in many ways, including teacher pay, school choice, state funding for schools, curricular measures, and the current Arkansas Teacher Residency Program (ATR).

Most of the impact to these programs and facets of school leadership remains to be seen. However, there will be a significant impact on the ATR Program. The ADE will be required to support the statewide implementation of a teacher residency or apprenticeship model using state-level rules and regulations that have yet to be drafted. During the pendency of this project, information will become available based on legislative and policy changes that may impact the teacher preparation design throughout Arkansas. To date, there has yet to be any information compiled on current residency effectiveness in the state of Arkansas. Based on our conversations with leadership at the ADE, the department could benefit from situated recommendations for the state of Arkansas, institutes of higher education (IHEs), and local school districts to support implementing an effective statewide teacher residency program.

Area of Inquiry

The ADE (Arkansas Department of Education) seeks guidance to support the systemic implementation of a statewide teacher residency requirement. Local school districts and IHEs already partner with residency programs, and each approaches implementation differently. Any IHEs that offer traditional or alternative educator preparation programs and do not currently operate residency programs will be required to develop the policies, practices, and procedures to support the year-long residency requirement. Additionally, local school districts hosting residents for the first time must establish policies, practices, and procedures for teacher residency (B. Miller, personal communication, May 1, 2023). Without guidance on evidence-based practices to support the implementation of characteristics of an effective statewide teacher residency program situated within the context of the state of Arkansas, IHEs and local school districts may implement dissimilar residencies that sustain inequities for students.

Before the teacher residency requirement, the ATR program primarily focused on two populations of prospective residents: high school students and paraprofessionals or classified employees in the school district (B. Miller, personal communication, December 13, 2022). For high school students seeking to earn a certified teaching assistant (CTA) certification and high school diploma simultaneously, to be later employed as a paraprofessional while completing a Bachelor of Science in Education

(BSE). Some school districts offered a Pre-Educator Program of Study leading to a CTA

credential (Teach Arkansas, n.d.). Additionally, the ATR program had three residency

levels dependent on participants' current role as a paraprofessional or classified

employee within a school district and admittance into an approved Arkansas Educator

Preparation Program (EPP) (Teach Arkansas, n.d.). The responsibilities of IHEs and

local school districts differed depending on the prospective resident and level. Since the

current ATR program will no longer exist in isolation as previously intended but within

the context of a statewide teacher residency requirement, the publications available

regarding residency implementation must change. Leadership at ADE suggests IHE

partners and local school districts, particularly those not previously operated a residency

program, will soon seek direction from Arkansas. Leaders at ADE have indicated that

these stakeholders could benefit from a guidebook of evidenced-based best practices in

statewide teacher residency program implementation that operationally defines

negotiable and non-negotiable elements given the context of each site (B. Miller,

personal communication, May 1, 2023).

Leadership at the ADE sees teacher residencies as essential to closing the gap

between teachers leaving the profession and the number of students graduating from

EPPs. However, there needs to be more research on required teacher residencies.

Thus, data from this project may inform the ADE's next steps and contribute to a more

extensive knowledge gap regarding the statewide implementation of a teacher

residency requirement in the field of education if more states consider such a

requirement. Furthermore, Dee and Goldhaber (2017) note an association between

school districts with higher concentrations of economically disadvantaged students,

black and Hispanic students, and a considerably higher share of classes taught by

educators without conventional licensure. By providing situated recommendations to

IHE partners and local school districts to cultivate and sustain teacher residencies, ADE

has the potential to provide all students in Arkansas with access to highly qualified

educators with the pedagogical knowledge to teach in the areas of highest need and

provide a model for teacher residency programs throughout the nation.

According to The New Teacher Project, TNTP (2021) study regarding the teacher

shortage in Arkansas, four percent of teachers in the state were uncertified, and three

percent were not teaching in their field of study. In addition, for some areas in the

southeast region, where the student population is primarily black, the percentage of

uncertified teachers was dramatically higher; 30% of public school teachers were

uncertified and over 50% in two districts were not certified. Current data regarding

student performance collected by the ADE through participation in the National

Assessment of Educational Progress found in the areas of mathematics and reading

achievement for students in grades four and eight, those receiving free or

reduced-priced lunch performed lower than non-qualifying students, indicating a

performance gap between low-income student and those not considered low income

(Arkansas Department of Higher Education, n.d.).

This project requires a deep understanding of the literature regarding the

implementation of statewide teacher residency/apprenticeship programs and a study of

the situational evidence related to teacher residency/apprenticeship programs in IHEs and local school districts in Arkansas to inform the continued expansion of ADE's residency model for educators in both traditional and non-traditional pathways to close the gap.

The main stakeholders for this project are those seeking to be certified public school teachers in Arkansas. As a result, local school districts, IHE partners, the Arkansas Department of Education, and, most importantly, students are the recipients and indirect stakeholders of the educators' efforts to become certified teachers. This project aims to inform decisions made by the Arkansas Department of Education to improve the quality and success of the teacher certification process by effectively implementing a statewide teacher residency program.

Purpose of Capstone

This capstone project aims to determine characteristics of effective statewide teacher residency programs that will support the data-driven systemic implementation of teacher residencies by IHEs and local school districts and to understand better and support positive outcomes for students and residents in underserved areas of the Arkansas Lower Delta region.

The concept of the teacher residency model originated to emulate the medical residency system (Guha, Hyler, & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Hollins & Warner, 2021). Initially conceived, these residencies aimed to tackle teacher recruitment and retention challenges within high-needs urban schools, particularly for subjects that posed staffing

challenges (Guha, Hyler, & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Its primary objectives were to

enhance teacher preparedness for teaching in urban school districts and to enhance the

recruitment and retention of highly skilled educators within urban schools (Hollins &

Warner, 2021). Early teacher residency programs also addressed the teacher shortage

in particular subject areas and the challenge of teacher retention, particularly in

low-income rural communities and urban areas (Hollins & Warner, 2021).

The following literature review will describe the teacher residency model through

situated learning. This investigation will focus on understanding what works, for whom,

and in what context. Our research will revolve around these inquiries within the

framework of a statewide teacher residency initiative. Subsequently, we will incorporate

research around the implementation of teacher residency programs while also

uncovering the inherent variations within these models. Our primary objective is to distill

the key attributes that characterize successful residencies, accounting for their

adaptation to urban and rural contexts. Furthermore, this investigation outlines

strategies for states to embed these essential traits within their residency programs.

Review of Literature

In what follows, we review relevant literature in the areas of teacher preparation using residency models in situated contexts across the United States.

Effective Teacher Residencies

The teacher residency is a partnership between a specific university and school district that combines hands-on classroom training for pre-service teachers with relevant academic coursework. The length of a teacher residency where aspiring teachers work closely with a highly skilled mentor teacher is typically one year. This model helps teachers in training learn the art of teaching through practical application. Participants may be paid a stipend and usually commit to teaching in the same school for a specified time after completing their residency (National Center for Teacher Residencies, 2023).

Over the past two decades, teacher residency models have garnered increasing recognition, with several states like California, Louisiana, and Texas implementing programs through statewide initiatives. While the initial focus was addressing teacher shortages in underperforming rural and urban school districts, the ultimate objective was to enhance student performance and achievement (Hollins & Warner, 2021). Key aspects of early teacher residency programs required novice, aspiring teachers to complete final coursework for licensure while teaching for at least one year under the guidance and supervision of a mentor teacher (Hollins & Warner, 2021).

The Arkansas Department of Education has voluntarily utilized some parts of a teacher residency model to achieve its articulated goal of *"Addressing the need for improved teacher preparation…address teacher shortages, quality, recruitment, and retention…which led to the development of the teacher residency model."*

In 2022, the Pathways Alliance Teacher Residency Working Group defined teacher residencies as "*...preparation pathways that are anchored in partnership and reflect a program curriculum that is collaboratively designed by local education agencies and teacher preparation programs to meet the goals of 1) ensuring aspiring teachers have affordable, high-quality opportunities and supports while they learn to teach and 2) supporting the instructional and staffing needs of local schools and districts. Residents are not teachers of record in their year-long pre-service clinical practice settings. They work alongside accomplished mentor teachers, experiencing the breadth of roles and responsibilities that teachers engage across a year as educational professionals."*

This definition does not represent all current models of teacher residencies, and the group acknowledges that different models exist as they each have unique qualities reflective of the varying local and contextual needs of the specific teacher residency (Berry et al., 2008, as cited in Chu, 2022; DeMoss et al., 2022). However, key components are identified in research as effective practices of teacher residencies. Collecting data from successful teacher residency programs, in 2014 the National Center for Teacher Residencies identified common elements of effective teacher residency programs (Mourlam, et al., 2019). These include strong partnerships between

IHEs and school districts, recruitment of teacher residents and highly qualified mentors, the integration of coursework to complement fieldwork experience, coaching, feedback, and assessment for growth (NCTR, 2014; Guha et al., 2016; Silva et al., 2014; as cited in Chu, 2022).

Beck (2018) argues that teacher residencies align with the idea of a "third space" where theory and practice are integrated to complement one another for greater learning. The third space concept is drawn from the hybridity theory, where sensemaking and learning is rooted in synthesizing various thoughts and ideas (Bhabba, 1990; as cited in Zeichner, 2010). Teacher residencies cultivate this idea of a third space for greater sensemaking and understanding through the active integration of theory and practice within the learning experience (Beck, 2018; as cited in Mourlam, et al., 2019). Zeichner (2010, as cited in Washburn-Moses, 2017), describes the third space concept in teacher residencies as a collaborative and transformative learning environment where novice and experienced teachers work together to enhance their teaching abilities. The National Association for Professional Development Schools (NAPDS) further echos the third space as a learning community that seamlessly merges theory and practice by fostering intentional collaboration between schools and universities (NAPDS, 2021; as cited in Washburn-Moses, 2017).

The third space concept suggests that it is possible to engage in teacher residencies, which provide a supportive, immersive experience where both novices and master teacher mentors have the opportunity to learn new teaching strategies and

co-construct their knowledge through open communication, collaboration, and an interchange of insights and teaching methods (Chu, 2022; Washburn-Moses, 2017). The teaching residency places significant emphasis on the inherent worth of reciprocal learning and acknowledges the valuable expertise and contributions of both the resident and the mentor in shaping and refining effective teaching practices (Zeichner, 2010; & NAPDS, 2021; as cited in Washburn-Moses, 2017). This concept highlights the importance of creating a space beyond the traditional roles of teacher, resident, and mentor, allowing for mutual learning and growth.

While there is ample research regarding teacher residencies, there is limited research on initiatives of state-wide teacher residencies. However, a report conducted by the National Academy of Education in 2021, Evaluating and Improving Teacher Preparation Programs, focused specifically on states that had implemented state-wide initiatives for teacher residencies. All three state-wide teacher residencies evaluated in the report (California, Louisiana, and Texas) used the framework established by the National Center for Teacher Residencies to facilitate implementation (Hollis & Warner, 2021). The NCTR is widely recognized as a teacher education and preparation leader due to its research-driven work, innovative approach, and significant contributions to the field of education. The NCTR framework provides guidelines for school districts and IHEs to ensure all elements of successful teacher residencies have been examined for effective implementation (Pike & Carli, 2020). In 2021, the NCTR revised their standards into eight research-informed levers (NCTR, n.d.) to further promote equity and the success of teacher residency implementation.

NCTR Levers for Equitable Teacher Residencies:
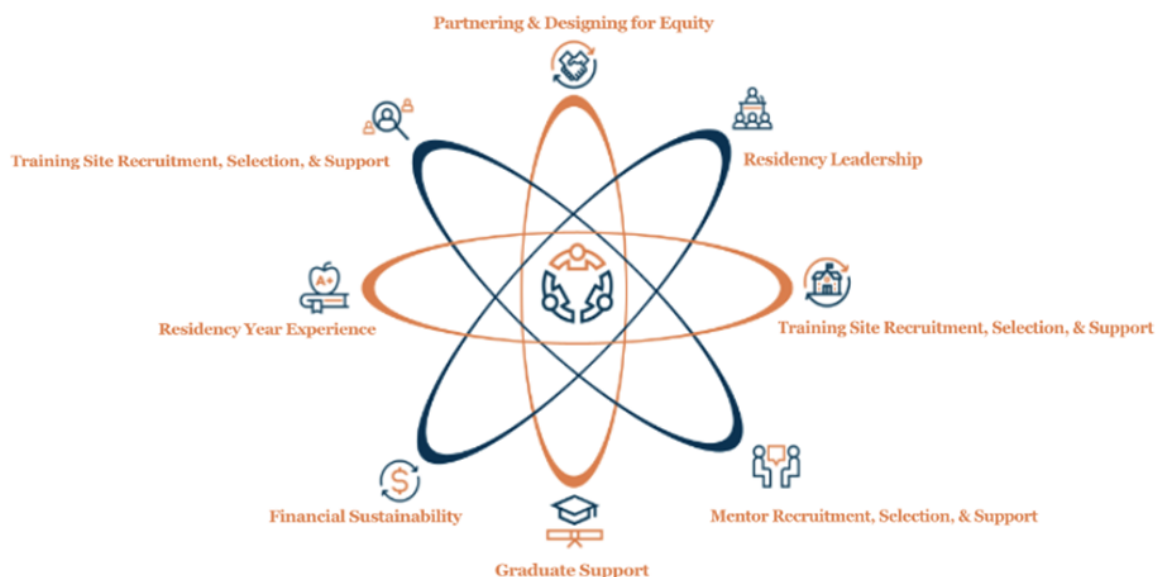
Partnering and Design for Equity: This lever emphasizes the importance of intentionally partnering with schools, districts, and communities to ensure that teacher residencies are designed to meet the needs of diverse learners. It promotes collaboration among stakeholders to create a shared vision and designing residency programs that address inequities in educational opportunities. "This lever leads with Equity by Design, a practice that organizations, teams, and individuals can use to mitigate the impact of racism and inequity in the design process" (EquityXDesign, 2019; as cited in NCTR, 2021, p.3).

Residency Leadership: This lever emphasizes the need for influential program leaders who guide and support residents and mentors. It encourages leaders to maintain an awareness of their influence over others. This lever helps to elevate those typically underrepresented for greater equity (Theoharis, 2009; as cited in NCTR, 2021).

Training Site Recruitment, Selection, and Support: This lever emphasizes the significance of identifying partner schools and districts committed to equity and social-emotional learning that prioritize supporting resident teachers in their development, growth, and inclusion into the school environment.

Mentor Recruitment, Selection, and Support: Effective mentors are crucial to the success of residency programs (Chu, 2019; as cited in NCTR, 2021). This lever emphasizes recruiting and selecting diverse and experienced educators who can provide valuable guidance and support to residents. This lever also ensures the learning environment provides ongoing professional development and support for mentors as teacher leaders.

Resident Recruitment and Selection: This lever focuses on ensuring the diversity of the residency cohort is a reflection of the diversity of the student population for which the resident will be teaching. Working to identify diversity helps remove barriers that impact equity and access to teacher preparation programs (Beck, 2020; as cited in NCTR, 2021).

Residency Year Experience: The residency year is critical in preparing future teachers. This lever focuses on ensuring that residents have high-quality experiences in the classroom, with opportunities to observe, co-teach, and gradually assume full teaching responsibilities. Mentors support teacher residents to develop teaching skills for academic content while learning to uphold their students' cultural identities (Darling-Hammon, et al., 2007; as cited in NCTR, 2021).

Financial Sustainability: Sustainable funding is essential for the long-term viability of residency programs. This lever emphasizes the need for securing adequate financial resources through partnerships, grants, and other funding sources. It involves exploring innovative financing models to ensure the ongoing financial sustainability of residency programs.

Graduate Support: Supporting graduates beyond the residency year is crucial for their continued development as effective teachers. This lever aims to foster a sense of community and support to ensure graduates' long-term success in the teaching profession.

NCTR Elements of Success for Policy Consideration

The *Every Student Succeeds Act* allows states to use existing state authority and expanded flexibility to support school districts and institutes of higher education in creating and sustaining teacher residencies. As a result, in addition to the Levers for Equitable Teacher Residencies, The National Center for Teacher Residencies established four key components for policy consideration in developing successful, high-quality teacher residency programs: partnership and collaboration, recruitment and selection, coaching and feedback, and assessment and evaluation (2017).

Partnership and Collaboration

Establishing and maintaining solid relationships and school partnerships is the foundation of the teacher residency model (NAPDS, 2021; as cited in Washburn-Moses,

2017). Establishing authentic partnerships and promoting collaboration between schools, districts (LEAs), and institutes of higher education (IHEs) is essential for effective implementation and teacher residencies' long-term viability. The state plays a crucial role in facilitating this collaboration by clearly defining expectations, facilitating meetings, offering incentives, and ensuring conformity among critical stakeholders (NCTR, 2017). By assuming this pivotal role, the state creates an environment that encourages collaboration among all parties involved, ultimately contributing to the success and sustainability of teacher residency programs (NCTR, 2017). Chu (2022) underscores the importance of collaboration, arguing that policymakers must recognize the intricacy and complexity of residency programs to develop policies that promote effective collaboration among stakeholders. The partnership for learning is only effective when there is clear communication and collaboration between stakeholders in institutes of higher education (IHEs) and districts (Chu, 2022).

Some school partnerships foster an environment prioritizing the collective pursuit of improvement and a mutual appreciation for effective teaching methods. These collaborations create a space where shared goals are valued and embraced, enabling all parties involved to work together toward enhancing teaching practices. School partnerships lay the foundation for productive exchanges of ideas, expertise, and resources by cultivating this shared understanding, ultimately benefiting educators and students alike (NCTR, 2017; Peel, Peel & Baker, 2002).

Research on school partnerships suggests that allocating time for building

relationships aids in fostering a shared understanding of the most effective strategies to

be implemented (NCTR, 2017). By dedicating sufficient time to these aspects,

stakeholders can establish strong connections and develop a shared understanding of

the best approaches to employ. This intentional investment in building relationships

creates the foundation for effective collaboration and paves the way for the successful

implementation of initiatives (Peel, Peel, & Baker, 2002). Programs that prioritize

effective communication and collaboration establish an environment characterized by

trust and empowerment among critical stakeholders. This trust and empowerment are

essential for fostering sustainable and thriving school and university partnerships

(Hollins & Warner, 2021; NCTR, 2017; Peel, Peel & Baker, 2002). By fostering open

lines of communication, collaboration, and valuing the contributions of all participants,

these programs create a sense of shared ownership and commitment to the

partnership's success (Hollins & Warner, 2021; NCTR, 2017; Peel, Peel & Baker, 2002).

Over time, this enables the partnership to flourish, ensuring its longevity and the positive

impact it has on the educational community (Hollins & Warner, 2021; NCTR, 2017; Peel,

Peel & Baker, 2002).

Recruitment and Selection

The choice of mentors should be guided by their proven ability to influence

student learning outcomes and exemplify effective teaching practices. Teacher

residency models should be designed to foster supportive school environments that

benefit both the mentor teacher and the resident (NCTR, 2017). To further support

mentors, various forms of incentives and recognition are encouraged to help aid and

acknowledge mentors. Enhancing professional growth opportunities for mentors, such

as specialized training or networking, can also empower them further to refine their

teaching expertise (NCTR, 2017). Additionally, improving working conditions, such as

reducing administrative burdens or providing additional resources, can help alleviate

potential challenges and enable mentors to focus on their mentoring responsibilities

(Hollins & Warner, 2021; NCTR, 2017; Scheib & Rowland, 2022).

States striving to enhance equitable access to qualified teachers can prioritize

recruiting highly motivated candidates genuinely interested in serving areas with a

pressing need for quality educators. States can effectively address the disparity in

teacher distribution by focusing on attracting candidates passionate about teaching in

underserved communities. This intentional recruitment strategy ensures that students in

high-need areas can access dedicated and committed teachers eager to make a

positive difference in their education (NCTR, 2017).

Research suggests offering a range of incentives to effectively encourage and

recruit aspiring teachers and mentor teachers for specific schools (NCTR, 2017; Peel,

Peel & Baker, 2002). These incentives may include financial assistance in the form of

federal and state grants, as well as loans and scholarships. Providing such support can

enhance the ability to attract, select, and retain talented aspiring teachers. These

incentives serve as valuable tools for promoting the profession and creating an

environment that motivates individuals to pursue teaching careers and contribute to improving education. (NCTR, 2017; Peel, Peel & Baker, 2002).

A recent study by the New Teacher Project (TNTP, 2021) examining the teacher shortage issue in Arkansas revealed that potential teachers needed more awareness and understanding of the state's incentive programs. Additionally, the study identified that some of the state's programs needed more adequate funding, diminishing their ability to make a substantial impact. The findings highlight the need for improved communication and awareness about incentive programs to ensure that aspiring teachers are well-informed. Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of allocating sufficient funding to these programs, enabling them to attract and retain qualified candidates in Arkansas (TNTP, 2021).

States should proactively explore suitable incentives to support aspiring teachers, ensuring programs are well-defined in terms of eligibility criteria and that incentives are readily available and widely communicated to promote greater awareness among potential participants (NCTR, 2017; TNTP, 2021). Additionally, potential teachers should have access to clear and comprehensive information about the specific requirements associated with the programs available. By taking these measures, states can recruit potential teachers and facilitate access to the support and resources they need to pursue licensure through a teacher residency program (NCTR, 2017; TNTP, 2021).

Coaching and Feedback

Resident teachers greatly benefit from the guidance and support of experienced mentor teachers who can offer valuable coaching and feedback (Goodman, Roegman & Reagan, 2016; Hollins & Warner, 2021; NCTR, 2017; Scheib & Rowland, 2022). Among the various roles a mentor teacher plays, one of the most significant is providing coaching specific to the local context (Honig, 2009). This includes familiarizing residents with the local community and helping them develop a sense of comfort and appreciation. Mentor teachers enable residents to understand better the dynamics of the local context to foster stronger connections with students, families, and colleagues. This invaluable support contributes to the residents' growth and development as effective educators in their specific context (Goodman, Roegman & Reagan, 2016; Honig, 2009).

Mentor teachers also serve in the capacity of providing feedback and technical skill modeling for residents. Mentor teachers support residents by understanding the compliance aspect of the contextual standards of teaching and strategic teaching methods, such as assessment and measuring student success. Research suggests one of the most impactful ways mentors can ensure their residents make progress is through modeling or "teaching by example." (Goodman, Roegman & Reagan, 2016; Pike & Carli, 2021; NCTR, 2017).

Assessment and Evaluation

States play a crucial role in overseeing and ensuring that their teacher educational preparation programs maintain the highest standards and comply with the

requirements for approved pathways to state licensure. One such pathway is through

teacher residency programs that blend theoretical knowledge with practical experience.

These programs aim to cultivate exceptionally qualified teachers who are well-equipped

to stop into the classroom and begin teaching from day one (NCTR, 2017).

The National Center for Teacher Residencies (2017) advocates for a

collaborative approach that promotes a shared understanding and alignment of teacher

efficacy standards among states, districts, and teacher residency programs. These

entities must collect and exchange comprehensive teacher performance, student

achievement, and supervisory feedback data. This shared data-driven approach

enhances the effectiveness and quality of teacher residencies. Ultimately, this can lead

to better outcomes for educators and students (NCTR, 2017). As an illustration, a 2021

study by the National Academy of Education explored teacher preparation programs,

including Louisiana's statewide teacher residency initiative. One notable aspect of this

program was the establishment of governance teams responsible for conducting regular

evaluations of teacher residents, their mentors, and the program's overall effectiveness.

This proactive approach aimed to foster continuous improvement and ensure the

program's ongoing success to serve its participants better (Hollins & Warner, 2021).

Urban and Rural Teacher Residencies

A key aspect in both rural and urban teacher residency models is ensuring that

the teacher residents have authentic teacher placement experiences under the

guidance of a strong mentor teacher. Research suggests that teachers in their first and

second year of teaching are more likely to teach in high-needs schools (HNS) and need

to be more prepared to handle the challenges of these teaching placements (Pike &

Carli, 2020).

For rural schools, one strategy that can support teacher resident placements is

communication and understanding of the unique, situated attributes in the community

(Valente et al., 2022). In the rural California Kern Rural Teacher Residency program, for

example, participants are trained using a framework of strong mentor teachers with

rural, high-need teaching experience paired with induction support and embedded

professional development during the residency (Valente et al., 2022). Because of this

framework, resident teachers can understand the nuances of rural high-needs teaching

and make educated decisions about their career pathways based on this experience.

Teachers often state a fondness for working with parents and students when they

complete their residencies and accept positions within the district of their previous

placement. (Valente et al., 2022).

Both rural and urban residencies have seen relative success. In a study of

teacher residents for Boston Public Schools, residents had similar student achievement

scores in some areas as traditionally trained teachers. (Papay et al., 2012). Though

some student achievement scores were initially less promising, resident teachers

improved their craft and scores. They could be retained to support high-needs schools

within Boston's sizeable urban district to some level of success. The key indicators of

growing and retaining ethnically diverse teacher candidates were achieved over time

despite some lagging achievement scores. Further information also supports that

teachers of color can benefit from a residency program that removes barriers to initial

certification and focuses on creating a community using an affinity group model to

support the wellness of diverse staff in a predominantly white career pathway

(Pendharkar, 2021).

Research Design

The theoretical background underpinning our inquiry is sensemaking, in that a policy activities are only as coherent as policy actors' understanding of the aims and mechanisms of a policy (Canata et al., 2021). Weick (1993) defined sensemaking as a process that individuals and groups engage in to make sense of and understand ambiguous situations or events. As such, sensemaking is an ongoing, iterative process by which interpreting situations, policies, and feedback can be harnessed to construct and navigate complex situations and create shared meaning (Weick, 1995). "The basic idea of sensemaking is that reality is an ongoing accomplishment that emerges from efforts to create order and make retrospective sense of what occurs" (Weick, 1993, p. 635). From this idea of sensemaking, organizations, and individuals can conceptualize policies and procedures and engage in shared meaning-making. Weick's work highlights the act of sensemaking as active, interpretive, and social as people and organizations find meaning in new, ambiguous, or changing scenarios.

Several other researchers conducted sensemaking research and its effects on organizations and policies in the late 1990s through the 2020s. Most of the work conceptualizes and draws upon Weick's early research and theories (Christianson, M.K., et al., 2009; Sonenshein, S., et al., 2012). This continually growing research topic highlights the multitude of ways that organizations and individuals construct meaning before, during, and after times of complex change and ambiguous times. Since the definition of sensemaking is iterative and ongoing, it stands to reason that the

complexities surrounding shared sensemaking will continue to evolve into areas such as

statewide policy implementation of special programs, such as teacher residencies

(Weick, 1995).

In 2022, Yuting Chu examined sensemaking in Louisiana residency programs,

which recently implemented a state-based teacher residency model. Teacher

residencies as an approach to both preparation for teachers and field experience hold

much promise. The nuanced ways people make sense of these experiences can be

facilitated by a cohesive structure that allows stakeholders room to understand

implementation, including shared experiences (Chu, 2022). Drawing on the shared

experiences building needs of participants in Louisiana that Chu identified along with

the idea of situated implementation based upon Honig's work, we will examine how

shared meaning-making can support both the teacher resident and the IHE that is

sponsoring residencies in the state of Arkansas from a conceptual framework. (Honig,

2009).

Though our inquiry and recommendations will be specific to situated

implementation of teacher residencies across Arkansas, throughout the data collection

and stakeholder engagement, we will frame our project with sensemaking theory to

assist in creating meaning with both higher education partners and the Arkansas

Department of Education. Although we will primarily use situated implementation of

teacher residencies across Arkansas as a theoretical framework to guide our inquiry, we

will also use sensemaking theory to inform our research design to create meaning with

higher education partners and the Arkansas Department of Education. This will result in positive outcomes and understanding for teacher residents and, ultimately, students within Arkansas as policymakers, IHEs, and teacher residents seek to create meaning in a new paradigm of teacher preparation.

Conceptual Framework

Contemporary research discoveries are related directly to this project through the lens of situated learning, defined in this case as the situated implementation of policies and processes. Honig's situated implementation framework of what works, for whom, in what context, and with what variables, along with the National Center for Teacher Residencies' Levers for Equitable Teacher Residencies were used for this investigation (Honig, 2009 & National Center for Teacher Residencies, n.d.). Honig espouses that the question of "what works?" is reflected in the on-the-ground realities of policy implementation to strengthen outcomes in educational policies. Instead of the binary view of whether this works: yes or no? Honig challenges individuals and organizations to build on Weick's idea of sensemaking and instead asks, "What works for whom, when, where, and why?" (Honig, p.333). This viewpoint acknowledges the complexity and situated nature of the experiences of educational professionals, policymakers, and institutes of higher education. To building on this complexity identified by Honig, this conceptualization also includes an acknowledgment of the interdependence of elements within a school system change initiatives such as teacher residency implementation (Wheatley, 1992).

The Levers for Equitable Teacher Residencies identified by the NCTR further identify the situated implementation required of teacher residency programs. The levers recognize the needs of different communities and institutions by providing flexibility along with non-negotiable components of the teacher residency. Non-negotiables are defined as a year-long residency experience, financial sustainability of the program, and situated implementation components of partnering and designing programs for equity, mentor selection, recruitment, and support.

Building on the work of Honig and the National Center for Teacher Residencies' Levers for Equitable Teacher Residencies, our project conceptualizes our research inquiry into what works, for whom, and in what contexts. We will explore how Arkansas can use situated implementation to strengthen its teacher pipeline using its newly defined residency model. We will utilize the following conceptual framework to yield implementation recommendations for the Arkansas Department of Education:
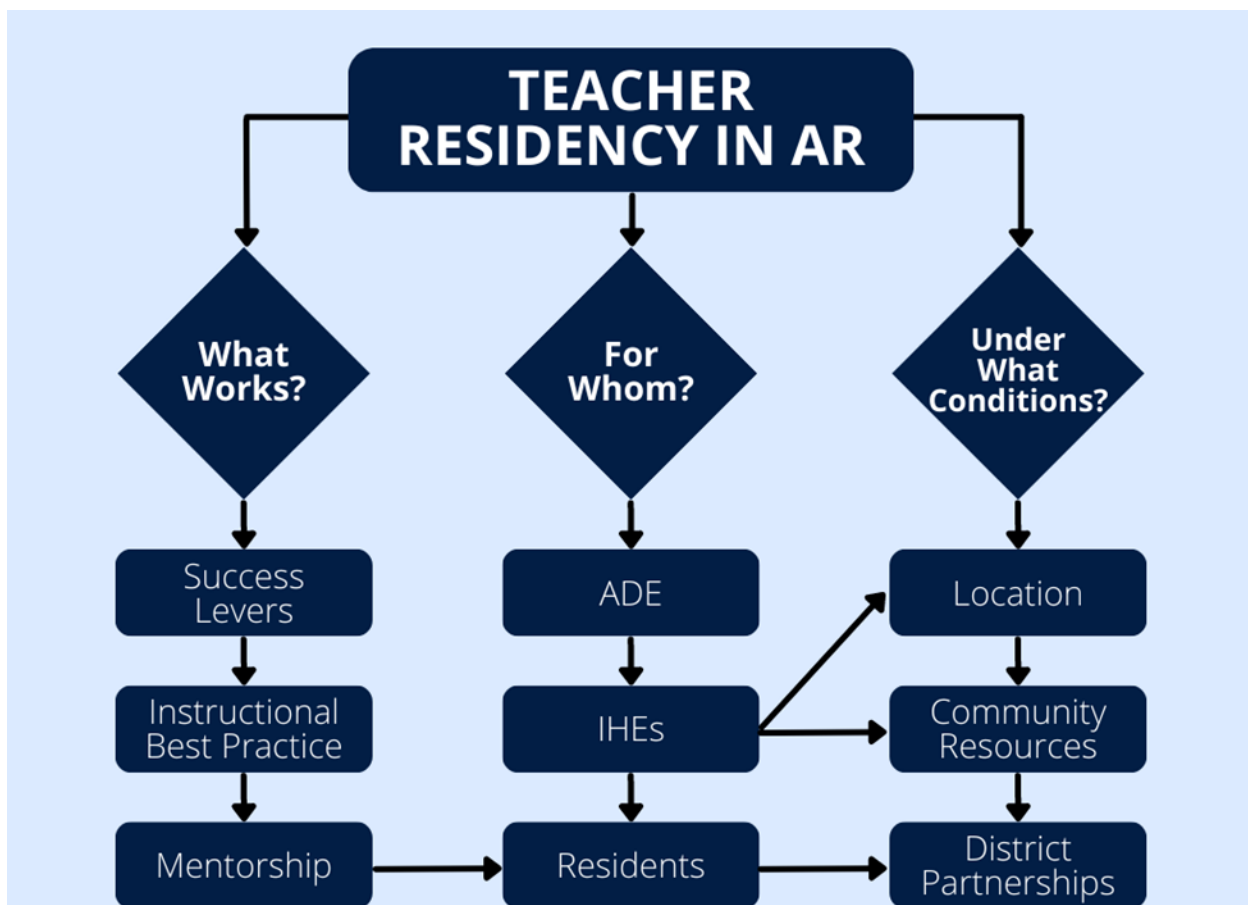
Research Question 1: What types of contexts exist in Arkansas institutes of higher education concerning the capacity of IHE teacher preparation programs through which teacher residencies will be implemented?

Research Question 2: Given the contextual findings, what elements of teacher residencies require implementation with integrity across Arkansas, and what elements can institutes of higher education adapt to meet their contextual needs?

The first question seeks to understand the situated contexts at institutes of higher education (IHEs) through which teacher residencies will be implemented, specifically regarding the student demographics and capacity of their teacher preparation programs. The second question strives to synthesize and situate this understanding to an analysis of evidence-based practices in teacher residencies to provide recommendations for situated implementation of teacher residencies. For our project to answer these research questions, our team will need to understand the field of research and best practices across the country regarding teacher residencies. We will complete an analysis of relevant literature on characteristics of effective residencies and opportunities for states to support those characteristics, with attention to the characteristics of effective residencies for IHEs with primarily rural, suburban, or urban student demographics in the K-12 districts they serve, to gain an understanding of best practices in the field. We will supplement our analysis of the literature with an analysis of interviews with experts in the field of teacher residencies related to sensemaking and situated implementation of state-supported teacher residencies.

To understand situated contexts at IHEs, we will need to understand their student demographics and the capacity of their teacher preparation programs to implement teacher residencies, including the number of IHE/district partnerships and the available personnel and financial resources to support partnerships. Situated factors in residency programs, such as credit hours, cohort size, number of partnering groups, and salary, can impact how a teacher residency program is implemented (Washburn-Moses, 2017). We will examine these variables within a theoretical framework of sensemaking (Weick, 1995). Sensemaking is an ongoing, iterative process by which the interpretation of situations, policies, and feedback can be harnessed to construct and navigate complex situations and create shared meaning. Additionally, we will examine these variables within a conceptual framework of situated implementation (Honig, 2009). Insight from faculty and staff responsible for designing and implementing teacher preparation programs at institutions implementing teacher residencies will allow us to realize real and perceived supports and barriers to implementing teacher residencies. This data will allow us to provide the Arkansas Department of Education with recommendations for the situated implementation of teacher residency programs in the varied contexts of their IHEs as they implement a statewide residency program due to the new education policy.

Our conceptualization of context is rooted in Honig's (2009) situated implementation framework that aims to uncover how specific policies, people, and places interact to produce varied results and contribute to a growing body of knowledge about those particular interactions. We conceptualize elements of teacher residencies

as characteristics of effective residencies with significantly similar definitions across

sources found in the literature analysis. Our conceptualization of the capacity of teacher

preparation programs is based on the National Center for Teacher Residencies' (2018)

standards for effective teacher residencies about the program and partnership

sustainability competency area. Indicators for standards in this area include the ability to

meet district hiring needs and the commitment of the resources and personnel required

for effective implementation. Our conceptualization of a teacher residency is a rigorous

one-year classroom apprenticeship alongside a mentor in the district, purposely aligned

with coursework through a teacher preparation program at an IHE or alternative

certification provider (National Center for Teacher Residencies, 2018). We will continue

to work with the Arkansas Department of Education to establish a common

understanding of the term residency as the department further interprets and defines

the residency policy throughout this project. The conceptualization of our research

questions is additionally embedded in our positionality as researchers.

Project Design

We used a mixed methods qualitative investigation to address the research

questions. Our approach studied the phenomenon of implementing a teacher residency

in an IHE supplemented by a multiple-case study of IHEs. Phenomenological studies

explore the meaning of a particular experience for people who have experienced a

shared phenomenon (Bhattacharya, 2017). The population of interest in this study was

IHE staff experiencing the shared phenomenon of participating in implementing or

preparing to implement at teacher residency in Arkansas. In a multiple-case study approach, reporting on cases alone and with cross-case comparison allows researchers to analyze similarities and differences between cases (Bhattacharya, 2017). The cases in our multiple-case study were defined as IHEs implementing or preparing to implement teacher residencies through their teacher preparation programs. We used data collection protocols to secure qualitative data sets, which were analyzed in each case from focus groups and questionnaires with staff at IHEs. Further, we conducted a review of literature specific to effective practices in teacher residency implementation to inform situated recommendations for supporting IHEs in teacher residency implementation. Although research on effective practices in teacher residency implementation was not included as a research question because it was not a focus of data collection, the review was necessary to provide the ADE with their desired product of our investigation.

In what follows, we explore the details of data collection and analysis for this capstone project. First, however, we seek to highlight the nature of inquiry as a participatory practice that includes the interpretations and decisions of the researchers (Bhattacharya, 2017). To that end, we wish to identify ourselves and some elements of our own positionality relative to this project.

Positionality of Researchers

In approaching these questions, our research team consists of three individuals, each with an epistemological background that guides their participation in the project:

Shannon Elders is a Caucasian, cisgender female born and raised in Arkansas. Her undergraduate and graduate degrees were earned in Arkansas private and public universities, respectively, focusing on communication disorders and speech-language pathology. She holds a certificate of clinical competence (CCC-SLP) and a K-12 speech-language pathology educator license in Tennessee. Her professional experience has been as a teacher and administrator in the K-12 private school sector. Shannon is the head of school at a small, private K-8 school in Texas. She is a doctoral candidate at Vanderbilt University, where her work focuses on leadership and learning in organizations.

Tori Ranusch is a white, cisgender female born and raised in Michigan. Her undergraduate and graduate degrees were earned in Michigan at public universities, focusing on elementary education, special education, and K-12 educational administration. Tori attained Michigan teaching and administrator certification through traditional pathways. Her professional experience has been as a special education teacher and special education consultant. Tori serves as a special education consultant working primarily on state complaint investigations for a state department of education.

Korie Wilson-Crawford is a US-born, white, cisgender female whose life experiences have primarily been in the Midwest portion of the United States. Her undergraduate and graduate work focused on K-12 leadership and special populations in education. As a current district-level decision-maker, hiring agent for a large suburban school, and doctoral candidate at Vanderbilt University, her work focuses on human

resource and labor management, district policy, governance, and equity initiatives for students and staff. Korie holds a Michigan teaching certification and a Michigan administrators' certification, both attained through traditional pathways for degrees at public universities. This research is aligned with her professional interest in increasing rigor and relevance in pre-service teacher programs.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data Collection Timeline

The timeline for data collection was sequential, with focus groups of IHE staff and interviews with field experts completed first, followed by questionnaires to IHE staff. This allowed the focus groups with IHE staff to inform questionnaires to IHE staff and for interviews with field experts to complement, clarify, and further inform the tools used in focus groups and questionnaires. The timeline for data collection was as follows:

June-August 2023: Interviews with field experts via Zoom.

July-August 2023: Focus group with IHE staff and ADE experts in person and via Zoom.

August-September 2023: Questionnaires dispersed to IHE staff involved in teacher preparation programs via the IHE teacher preparation programs' listserv.

- Reminders sent out weekly to complete the questionnaire through the first week of September.

July-September 2023: Analyzed findings of data collected, beginning with field expert

interviews, IHE staff focus groups, and IHE staff questionnaire.

Data Collection

The design of this project employed data collection methods selected to gather

the specific data needed to answer the research questions. *Figure 1: Data Collection*

Matrix outlines the relationship between the questions, data, and methods. The data

collection was purposefully sequenced, with interviews occurring following the focus

groups, as the focus groups were used to inform the design of the interview and

questionnaire instruments.

Project Questions	Data Needed	Data Collection Methods
PQ 1: What types of contexts exist in Arkansas institutes of higher education concerning student demographics and capacity of the teacher preparation program through which teacher residencies will be implemented?	● IHE staff descriptions of the student populations in which their residents will be placed and the capacity of teacher preparation programs to implement teacher residencies. ● IHE staff opinions of the current and desired	● Focus groups were conducted in person with each IHE staff from various AR regions and institution types. ● Questionnaire distributed online via email to IHE staff in teacher preparation programs to understand the experiences of those currently

	state of implementation of teacher residencies.	implementing internships or student teaching programs.
PQ 2: Given the contextual findings, what elements of teacher residencies require implementation with integrity across Arkansas, and what elements can institutes of higher education adapt to meet their contextual needs?	● Evidence-based descriptions of characteristics of effective teacher residencies in the literature, with attention to student demographics and capacity of teacher preparation programs. ● Field experts in teacher residencies' descriptions of the non-negotiables and adaptable elements of teacher residency implementation currently situated in AR.	● Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted by Zoom with field experts in teacher residencies. ● Analysis of literature on characteristics of effective teacher residencies in the US from 2013-2023 and state support for those characteristics.

Figure 1: Data Collection Matrix

Participant and Site Selection

For this project, we obtained participants from two sample populations: IHE staff and field experts in teacher residencies. For this study, IHE staff were defined as individuals at the IHE who lead, teach coursework within, or facilitate partnerships with

districts in the IHEs' teacher preparation programs. We defined field experts in teacher

residencies as individuals with recognized knowledge or experience, as evidenced by

employment with nationally recognized teacher residency organizations, experience in

nationally recognized teacher residency programs, experience with statewide

implementation of teacher residency programs, or published research on teacher

residencies. We formed samples for these populations using non-probability sampling

strategies.

For focus groups with IHE staff and interviews with field experts, we used

purposive sampling to form our sample in the sense that participants were intentionally

selected in purposive sampling because of their unique capacity to answer a project's

questions based on their knowledge or experience (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). IHE leaders

were selected to participate in focus groups because of their knowledge and experience

in teacher preparation programs currently implementing or preparing to implement

teacher residency programs.

Similarly, field experts were selected to participate in interviews because of their

knowledge and experience in implementing teacher residency programs related to the

malleable and non-malleable elements of teacher residency implementation in varying

contexts. In addition to participants' capacity to answer a project's questions,

researchers must consider what can be done with available time and resources when

selecting a sample (Patton, 2022, p. 244, as cited in Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Given our

limited connection to IHEs in Arkansas, five leaders were recruited from IHEs in

Arkansas through their familiarity with our contact at the Arkansas Department of Education concerning his previous role in the Arkansas Teacher Residency Program.

To represent the diverse contexts of IHEs, IHE leaders were recruited from a two-year college, a private university, and a public university with varying teacher preparation program capacities. Field experts and historians were recruited through their involvement with teacher residencies at the Arkansas Department of Education.

We employed a voluntary response strategy to create a sample of IHE staff to provide questionnaires. We sent a link to a questionnaire in Qualtrics to an email listserv of staff in teacher preparation programs at all IHEs in Arkansas. Although this strategy does not guarantee a statistically representative sample, the email listserv provided us access to staff with varying backgrounds and experiences in student teaching models, internships, or teacher residencies that can provide diverse insights into supports and barriers to implementation at their IHEs. As an incentive to respond to the questionnaire, we entered respondents' names into a lottery for four Starbucks gift cards.

Data Collection Protocols

The focus group protocol (Appendix A) aimed to gather data from IHE staff on the contexts of IHEs in Arkansas specific to the capacity of their teacher preparation programs and the demographics of the students their residents currently or will serve at K-12 district partners. Focus groups are well suited to studies that explore experiences in specific contexts (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Within our multiple case study approach,

focus groups provided an opportunity to glean insight into IHE staff's co-generated

understandings of their shared experiences in implementing or preparing to implement

teacher residencies. Our conceptual framework informed the focus group protocol of

situated implementation and Honig's (2009) conceptualization of policies, people, and

places as implementation influences. The focus group protocol for IHE staff provided

insight into the people and places influencing implementation, including factors such as

credit hours, cohort size, number of partnering groups, and salary each teacher

preparation program can offer.

An interview protocol was used with field experts to better understand effective

residencies' characteristics with attention to their situated implementation; however, we

used a semi-structured approach to interviews. A semi-structured interview approach

allows the conversational path to be customized and co-constructed with each

participant (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). The interview protocols for field experts as well as

ADE field experts and historians (Appendices B and C, respectively) sought to provide

insight into situated implementation and policy as an implementation influence by

identifying characteristics of effective residencies as they apply to varying contexts and

opportunities for states to support implementation within those contexts.

The questionnaire protocol (Appendix D) aimed to provide further insight into

people and places as implementation influences by soliciting input from additional

individuals at each site involved with internships or student teaching in teacher

preparation programs. These individuals could provide detailed accounts of current and

desired implementation states for teacher residencies. Moreover, the questionnaire sought input from individuals with various roles in teacher preparation programs at various stages of transitioning to teacher residencies. Questionnaires can efficiently collect data from a large pool of participants with limited time (Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

Data Analysis

We analyzed focus group transcripts, interview transcripts, and questionnaires using a deductive reasoning model (Hyde, 2000). To do so, we developed thematic codes based on our theoretical sensemaking framework and situated implementation conceptual framework. To determine what works, for whom, under what conditions, we developed codes that indicate people as implementation influences, policy as implementation influences, and place as implementation influences. We also sought to determine whether each influence served as a barrier or facilitator to implementation. As we read through each transcript, we searched for direct or indirect references in each excerpt by participants and respondents to any of these influences and their role as barriers or facilitators. Some excerpts were coded as referencing multiple implementation influences simultaneously and serving as both a barrier and facilitator. For instance, an excerpt from a small private university chair in the focus group transcript discussing participation on a workgroup drafting rules for teacher residency implementation was coded as policy as an implementation influence, people as an implementation influence, and facilitator to implementation. Our analysis was further informed by a thorough review of the literature on characteristics of effective residencies

with attention to the eight levers for equitable teacher residencies identified by the

National Center for Teacher Residencies (2021): partnering and designing for equity;

training site recruitment, selection, and support; mentor recruitment, selection, and

support; resident recruitment and selection; residency leadership; residency year

experience; financial sustainability; graduate support (Appendix E). These levers were

considered for overlap with implementation influences. For example, an excerpt from an

teacher residency implementation expert at the ADE discussing how IHEs could

structure residents' weekly schedules during the first semester of the residency was

coded as policy as an implementation influence, facilitators to implementation,

partnering and design for equity, and residency leadership. We compared codes across

IHEs and between IHE staff to better understand the contexts of IHEs in which teacher

residencies are or will be implemented. These comparisons allowed us to determine

which elements of teacher residencies must be implemented with integrity in those IHEs

and which can be adapted to meet each IHE's contextualized needs. For instance, in

comparing focus group transcripts and questionnaire responses, we noted IHE leaders

from assorted IHEs expressed varying numbers of staff dedicated to teacher residency

implementation with various training experience, indicating state support for residency

leadership would need to be adapted to the context of each IHE, whereas questionnaire

responses and transcripts from interviews and focus groups indicated a lack of funding

for teacher residency implementation, so financial sustainability would need to be

addressed with all IHEs.

We used a form of data triangulation to provide detailed support for findings from the questionnaires and overcome the limitations of having a relatively small sample size in focus group data collection (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Combining and comparing the data from interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires, we triangulated the data with the aim to validate and comprehensively understand teacher residencies and strengthen the findings. We examined the findings from focus groups with IHE staff and interviews with field experts, followed by a thorough analysis of the findings from questionnaires to IHE staff. We then compared the themes that we coded across data sources, which helped to enhance the credibility of the findings by validating and corroborating information across the different sources. This also improved the study's validity by capturing diverse perspectives and minimizing bias associated with any single method. Triangulation enhanced the reliability of the findings by increasing the overall consistency and robustness of the data collected.

Field Expert Interview Analysis

To begin to understand contexts around the state from an expert's perspective, we coded the transcripts from interviews with field experts and historians at ADE. We interviewed the former deputy commissioner, assistant commissioner for educator effectiveness and licensure, and program manager for educator licensure due to their involvement in making decisions related to teacher residencies for the state of Arkansas. During interviews, we used a semi-structured interview protocol, prompting participants to describe their interpretations of the characteristics of effective teacher residencies and how those might be implemented within varying contexts in Arkansas.

Additionally, we asked participants to describe current and potential supports ADE could provide to IHEs to support teacher residency implementation. One interview was completed in person and recorded via Zoom with the former deputy commissioner. Another interview was conducted virtually over Zoom with the assistant commissioner for educator effectiveness and licensure and the program manager for educator licensure and recorded on the iPhone voice memo application. All interview recordings were uploaded to Otter AI for transcription.

To code interview transcripts, we developed a deductive, thematic coding scheme based on our conceptual framework and Honig's (2009) conceptualization of situated implementation as policy, people, places as implementation influences, and barriers to or facilitators for implementation. Initially, the National Center for Teacher Residencies Levers for Equitable Teacher Residencies (n.d.), were included in our codebook. However, the codes were removed after coding a small transcript sample as the scheme proved complicated in organizing the excerpts from our participants to answer our research questions. Interview transcripts were coded in Dedoose.

Interviewees' excerpts were analyzed to identify direct and indirect references to implementation influences and whether those influences served as barriers and/or facilitators to implementation. Although some responses referenced only one implementation influence as only a barrier or facilitator, many responses referred to multiple implementation influences and those influences were referred to as both a barrier and facilitator. These intersections were noted throughout the coding process.

As we coded each interview, we noted the frequency with which each implementation influence was referenced by charting the code applications in Dedoose. We used Dedoose to identify the number of excerpts in which a code was referenced and the excerpts referencing each code. To move from thematic codes to answering project questions, we re-coded responses to determine ADE experts' perceptions of the primary influences on implementation in the context of IHEs across Arkansas. We examined the frequency with which each excerpt coded with an implementation influence was coded as a barrier or facilitator to implementation (Figure 2). Interviewees directly or indirectly referenced people and policy as implementation influences at a greater rate than place as an implementation influence. Facilitators for implementation and barriers to implementation were referenced with similar frequency. Interviewees' excerpts were then analyzed through the context of the levers for equitable teacher residencies to determine how the ADE can support teacher residency implementation to align with the levers.

	People as Implementation Influences	Places as Implementation Influences	Policy as Implementation Influences
Barriers to Implementation	60	27	59

Facilitators to Implementation	112	32	77

Figure 2: Code Co-Occurrence for Focus Group Transcripts, Interview Transcripts, and Questionnaires

Focus Group Analysis

After analyzing field expert interviews, we coded transcripts from the focus group with IHE staff. Participants were those who responded to our contact at ADE's request for participation. Participants included a dean of a college of education and behavioral science at a large public university, a dean of general education at a two-year college, a math instructor in a two-year college teacher preparation program, a reading instructor in a two-year college teacher preparation program, and a chair of an education department at a small private university. During the focus group, we used a semi-structured focus group protocol prompting participants to describe the demographic makeup of their organization and the K-12 students served by their teacher preparation programs, their understanding of the teacher residency requirement, and their perceived capacity of their teacher preparation programs to implement the requirement. The focus group was conducted in person and recorded via Zoom. The focus group recording was uploaded to Otter AI for transcription, and our first pass at this data was a read to correct errors in the auto-transcription.

The same coding scheme used to analyze the expert interview transcripts was used to analyze the IHE focus group transcript, focusing on policy, people, and places as implementation influences and barriers to or facilitators for implementation. Interview transcripts were coded in Dedoose.

Like the expert interview transcripts, participants' excerpts were analyzed to identify direct and indirect references to implementation influences and whether those influences served as barriers and/or facilitators to implementation. Again, although some responses referenced only one implementation influence as only a barrier or facilitator, many responses referred to multiple implementation influences and those influences were referred to as both a barrier and facilitator. These intersections were noted throughout the coding process.

We used the same features in Dedoose to chart the code applications, noting the frequency with which each implementation influence was referenced throughout the focus group. Additionally, we compared the frequency with which influence was coded in the focus group transcript with the expert interview transcripts. After identifying the number of excerpts in which each code was referenced, we determined relevant excerpts for each code. To move from thematic codes to answering project questions, we re-coded responses to identify the primary influences on implementation from IHE leaders' perceptions in the context of their IHEs. Participants directly or indirectly referenced facilitators for implementation and people as implementation influences at a greater rate than policy or place as an implementation influence. Participants' excerpts

were then analyzed through the context of the levers for equitable teacher residencies

to determine how the ADE can support teacher residency implementation to align with

the levers.

Questionnaire Analysis

After analyzing the expert interview and focus group transcripts to understand the

contexts and experiences around teacher preparation, we analyzed the questionnaire

responses. The questionnaire was provided to 19 individuals in 19 teacher preparation

programs across 15 colleges and universities (five teacher preparation programs

existed within various locations of one university). These individuals included deans,

associate deans, and chairs of schools and colleges of education. They were asked to

provide the questionnaire to other relevant individuals in their departments and divisions

who will be involved with implementing teacher residencies. Although 20 individuals

viewed the questionnaire, only nine respondents completed the questionnaire. We did

not require all questions to be answered to submit the questionnaire. Thus, not all

questions were answered by the nine respondents. However, each question had at least

six responses. Respondents included deans of colleges of education, chairs of teacher

education, department chairs, internship coordinators, site coordinators, and university

supervisors. The questionnaire responses were collected in Qualtrics.

We used the same coding scheme to analyze the questionnaire responses as

the expert interview transcripts and the IHE focus group transcript to identify barriers to

and facilitators for teacher residency implementation and the roles of policy, people, and

places as implementation influences. Questionnaire responses were organized in Excel, then uploaded and coded in Dedoose.

Though questionnaire responses were analyzed like the expert interview and focus group transcripts to identify direct and indirect references to implementation influences, analysis primarily focused on those influences' role as barriers and/or facilitators to implementation as these emerged as common themes that aligned with the NCTR's levers. Since questionnaire responses were briefer than interview excerpts, responses more frequently aligned with one implementation influence at a time, and those influences were easier to delineate as a barrier or facilitator.

Once the questionnaire responses were coded in Dedoose, we charted code applications to determine the frequency of each code within the questionnaires. Further, we compared code applications between interview and focus group transcripts and questionnaire responses. After identifying the number of responses in which each code was referenced, we extracted relevant quotes for each code. To move from thematic codes to answering project questions, we identified the main barriers to and facilitators for implementation from IHE leaders' perceptions in the context of their IHEs with attention to the roles of implementation influences. We then analyzed questionnaire responses through the context of the levers for equitable teacher residencies to determine how the ADE can support teacher residency implementation to align with the levers.

Findings and Recommendations

Finding 1: Contexts around teacher preparation programs vary greatly throughout the state according to respondents from both ADE and IHEs. Of the many unique contexts that exist, *geographical differences, financial resources, placement opportunities* and staff (both IHE and local district) to support a residency experience should be considered when implementing this statewide requirement for residency.

Personnel Matters

In focus group responses, multiple variables were identified to explain the differences between institutes of higher education and the contexts within which their teacher preparation programs operate. Participants suggest that the State Department does not seem to recognize the complexities associated with these variables. Many focus group participants expressed similar sentiment to the following:

"…I have a limited number of faculty … thinking about having a school coordinator, we have interns spread out all over the place ... I might also have some aspiring teachers who are doing the coursework online, and not coming to seminar at all… How am I going to cover all aspects of that with the faculty that I have? Because my university is not about to add a position for site coordinator, they'll just add that to my list."

Others similarly noted that a gap exists between what the state expects of IHEs and the actual details of accomplishing the policy.

Demographics Matter

When asked about urban, suburban, and rural landscapes for an internship or residency experience, both focus group participants and interview participants indicated that there are primarily rural and suburban placements in most of the state, and there is only one section of Arkansas, Little Rock, that is designated as urban according to the U.S. Census. The rest of the state is classified as either suburban or rural, though many parts of Arkansas face conditions of poverty that are sometimes attributed to urban settings. Some in the focus group attribute the idea of urbanity to mean a diverse population of students. When discussing this, a small private college dean said:

"If you think about our typical districts, Walnut Ridge Hoxie, Pocahontas, and Bowdoin, Lixom, then places like Hendricks and Jonesborough seem urban for our students because the diversity in the K-12 student population is so much greater there."

This highlights the real and perceived differences around the definitions of diversity as well as urban education amongst higher education professionals and was representative of themes throughout the focus group.

Financial Resources Matter

When asked about the K-12 student and teacher preparation populations, all higher education leaders who responded to the questionnaire brought up contextual factors of race and geography. Further, five of the eight higher education respondents

acknowledged contextual needs around poverty/socio-economic status and free-lunch qualification for K-12 students.

Both focus group participants and interview participants shed light on the financial resource availability and constraints facing both students and university programs as being contextually difficult. The following quotes illustrate what we heard about financial constraints and resources. Nearly all college dean respondents espoused a similar sentiment:

"Like last semester, I had a single mom, who, I don't know how she would have done a one-year residency. Since she did could not work full time during her one semester internship, she had to borrow extra money on her student loan to cover her living expenses for she and her children. And she said to me, I couldn't have done that for a year…"

-Small Private University Dean

Financial constraints of students about to enter the final term of their teacher preparation program were highlighted by all focus group respondents as illustrated below.

And so as soon as we found out as soon as the executive order happened, and we were given that 2027, I worked with my capstone students, sort of as a focus group;... I asked them if you knew right now that your internship was not a semester; it was a full

year. What comes up for you? A job was the first thing that came up with them, like, how would I live? How would I pay for that?"

-Small Private University Dean

The resources of the students was juxtaposed with the resources of the colleges of education by a majority of focus group participants as well. Despite this, the sentiment of allocated resources being insufficient for the task arose as a common thread.

"And the only reason we have some monetary resources in the College of Education behavioral science is we have a large online program for Master's degree programs for building level superintendents … So what we do is get back money after we have at least 75 students, then the cost is covered, we get revenue … So that's how I have been able to pay the site coordinator for the summer to do the work…"

-Large Public University Dean

"That's always a challenge in Arkansas because of the disparity in pay, and there's always been a pay gap now that is closing because of loans. We're hearing from a lot of districts that really did pay well before, that they're not going to be able to do that and now that gap has shrunk. Those smaller, more rural schools are going to probably have some opportunities, and that they didn't before … but if they're losing enrollment and larger schools, keep gaining that gaps going to widen again…"

- Arkansas Department of Education Historian (referring to paid internships/residencies)

To understand the complexities of statewide implementation, the variables of financial resources for IHEs and teacher residents, we identified contextual challenges that need to be considered prior to LEARNS implementation in 2027.

Data analysis from the focus group, interviews, and questionnaires suggest that many unique contexts exist around Arkansas, including variables within the IHEs, the partnering K-12 school districts, and the students enrolled in educator preparation programs. The participants identified a need for flexibility and acknowledgment of these unique contexts within implementing a year-long residency model in the LEARNS Act.

Finding 2: Participants demonstrated differing understandings of teacher residencies and used an array of vocabulary and associated vernacular to describe the proposed teacher residency program.

Analysis of the data from the focus group found the variability of different terms and descriptors used by participants led to *"confusing language"* that impedes clarity and understanding. One IHE dean referred to the teacher residency as an internship, while another IHE dean used the term apprenticeship. In addition, discussions regarding teacher residency with the IHE deans and the Arkansas Department of Education experts yielded a variety of terms such as aspiring teacher, teacher resident, and teacher of record when speaking with the focus group participants. The IHE deans expressed frustration with the inconsistent terminology surrounding the state proposed teacher residency program. A small private university chair expressed her sentiment about the confusing language.

"In throwing around so many terms, it's hard to keep straight what they're talking about. Residency okay. Are you talking about the residency that every teacher will do?... The language is really going to have to be clearly defined before we can progress."

This view further reiterates how this may impact the IHEs' ability to plan and develop a program that aligns with their expressed understanding of the state's expectations.

In addition, there are eight alternative pathways to teacher certification currently approved and recognized by the state of Arkansas: *Arkansas Professional Educator Pathway, Arkansas Teacher Corps, American Board, Highly Qualified Professor, iTeach, Provisional Professional Teaching License, Teach For America, and Master's Degree Leading to a First Time License*. These alternative pathways differ significantly in their approach to admission, costs, and requirements for program completion and certification. One small private university chair expressed frustration with the number of different pathways to teacher certification. *"It almost seems like too many pathways to me. Now, I know they're trying to open doors of opportunity. But there are so many pathways that it's hard to present all the different alternatives."* This is one example of how the IHEs questioned their ability to accommodate the many different requirements of each teacher certification pathway.

Moreover, the Arkansas Department of Education has an active program titled, *"Teacher Residency Model"* that serves a different purpose and criteria than the state-wide teacher residency mandated by the governor's executive order and the focus of this investigation (*dese.ade.arkansas.gov*). The data suggest concerns surrounding

confusing language and multiple pathways to teacher certification in Arkansas as barriers to address in the implementation of teacher residency programs.

"Then you also have Department of Labor funding apprenticeships, but there's a very specific definition for apprenticeships…So, the idea of a resident versus an apprentice, do they mean the same thing?...Let's be clear about it."

—Arkansas Department of Education Historian

Similarly, the Arkansas Department of Education expert acknowledged the differences amongst the educational preparation plans (EPP) that exist throughout the state.

"We just call it a residency because each EPP has its own model. We're not doing the state's model. So, we're just calling it a residency for vocabulary purposes.

—Arkansas Department of Education Expert

The IHEs expressed a lack of clarity and confusion in three areas that impede their ability to plan for the teacher residency program. First, the IHE deans conveyed confusion around the various terms used to describe the teacher residency program and the lack of clarity and understanding these inconsistencies created. Secondly, the IHE deans and Arkansas Department of Education historians expressed uncertainty surrounding how and to what extent existing alternative pathways will be expected to adhere to the new teacher residency program requirements. Lastly, in addition to the inconsistent language and different alternative pathways to certification, the state currently has a separate "Teacher Residency Model," which the IHEs expressed

contributes to the convoluted dialogue. For example, the current teacher residency has a separate funding source through a federal grant awarded to the state, and different recruitment strategies and requirements than the statewide teacher residency program. The differences between these programs contribute to the difficulty in establishing clear standards for implementing the new statewide teacher residency program.

Finding 3: IHE leaders report that teacher residency program requirements and contextual adaptations require clarity if IHEs are expected to implement teacher residencies following best practices by 2027.

Data from focus groups and questionnaire responses indicate IHEs lack a clear understanding of how residency program implementation can be adapted to meet the contextual needs of their teacher preparation programs, faculty, students, and district partnerships. In discussing the elements of teacher residency program implementation that should be standard and those that should be differentiated among IHEs at the IHE leader focus group, a small private university dean shared:

"We were part of the group that drafted the rules. And we tried to build in as much flexibility as we could. Because our institutions are so different. …the consistent thing is the one year … so that feels like it's okay. That was part of the executive order. The act says one year … but everything else is to be decided in the rules."

The dean went on to describe some flexibilities established by the group drafting the rules, which they hoped would be maintained when the rules become finalized:

"We really tried to build in the model what you choose to do for that one year can be, you know, a two-three model, it can be that just that first semester, and then a five day the second semester. … We're hopeful that … the flexibility will remain after it is finalized."

Additionally, IHE leaders are unsure how to implement all the teacher residency options currently advertised by the ADE. A large public university dean in the IHE leader focus group noted:

"I'm concerned about our capacity to implement and maintain all of these programs. I can see us having five different pathways; there'll be some commonality until they get to a particular point. And then you've got about four or five different kinds of programs that you could run. How do you keep that maintained?"

The dean struggled to discern how to maintain so many different pathways absent guidance on their differentiation.

When surveyed, one IHE leader indicated that "rolling out a year residency without proper planning and lack of direction from the state" and "lack of definition and guidance on residencies from the state" are barriers that may limit the success of teacher residency implementation at their IHE. Other IHE leaders surveyed expressed circumstantial logistical concerns around teacher residency program implementation, such as setting up district partnerships in rural areas and securing placements for unpaid residents. They sought "clear rules and regulations… with direction and clarity on the expectations".

When interviewed, Arkansas Department of Education teacher residency historians and experts noted flexibility would be necessary for IHEs to implement teacher residencies successfully. When questioned about the elements of teacher residencies that might be different and those that need to remain the same, one ADE expert remarked on the contrasts that will need to exist between paid and unpaid residencies.

"I think there's going to be two kinds of residencies, the paid residency and the unpaid because you're still going to have the people that are taking over the classroom; they're just really doing the residency under a teacher, and they're not a teacher of record, per se."

The ADE expert also remarked on expected differences between residencies for elementary teacher candidates and secondary teacher candidates:

"I also think …it's gonna look different from elementary to secondary because we all know that secondary sometimes resides in a different college. And so that's where our deans would say … they're still struggling with that, you know, we don't have control over the math department or the finance department.".

The ADE experts indicated intent to develop protocols to more clearly articulate teacher residency requirements and adaptations when interviewed:

"So what we want to do is not to restrict it and rules, but we want to put it in protocol, because the protocol we can change. "

However, protocols drafted by the IHE workgroup that could outline the elements of teacher residency implementation that are malleable, and those that must be implemented uniformly are yet to be completed.

Although ADE is aware of the varying contexts in IHEs that must implement teacher residency programs, they have yet to provide IHEs with requirements for teacher residency implementation that establish a clear distinction between the elements of teacher residency implementation that must be implemented uniformly and those that can be adapted to meet their contextual needs.

Limitations and Future Research

The findings of this project must be considered in light of some limitations. Focus group and interview participants were selected through purposive sampling due to their working relationships with our contact at the ADE. Additionally, the questionnaires did not require respondents to indicate the IHE at which they were employed, and we were unable to determine if our respondents represented public institutions, private institutions, and two-year colleges. Thus, we were not able to determine whether any IHEs were not represented in either the focus group or questionnaire responses and our sample may not be representative of all IHEs in Arkansas. Further, we are unable to assert whether this sampling strategy resulted in a sample demographically reflective of the population of Arkansas. Future research on this topic should consider the demographic and institutional characteristics of sites and participants.

Due to the prolonged nature of policy development at the state level, the ADE has not yet finalized procedures and requirements for teacher residency implementation. As a result, we were not able to create a dissemination product sought by ADE, a guidebook for teacher residency implementation to provide to IHEs. However, data collected through focus groups, interviews, and questionnaires and analyzed in light of relevant literature on teacher residency implementation allowed us to provide a dissemination product with contextualized recommendations for the ADE to support IHEs with statewide teacher residency implementation. When the ADE concludes developing their procedures and requirements, we recommend they develop this resource.

Recommendation 1: Create an organizational framework that supports the LEARNS Act implementation utilizing stakeholder input and provides guidance for the unique contextual needs of students, districts, and IHEs.

Based upon Honig's work in situated implementation, the complex relationship between what works, for whom, and under what conditions must be considered in implementing education policy. Honig states "that whether or not a policy works is not an inherent property of the program or intervention itself. Rather, its outcomes depend on interactions between that policy, people who matter to its implementation, and conditions in the places in which people operate" (Honig, 2009). Therefore, when we pair the research of Honig with the questionnaire data, interviews and focus groups, we recommend that the ADE create a framework for residencies that takes into account the

need for this new policy to be implemented with great regard to the contextual need of residents, district partners and institutions of higher education.

For example, sensemaking within the implementation process of a policy can support the achievement of the policy goals. (Honig, 2009, Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002 & Weick, 1995). "This orientation also reflects relatively recent policy implementation findings about sensemaking interpretation and learning as unavoidable dimensions of implementation processes. Studies in this vein uncover how individual and group cognitive processes contribute to implementers' variable policy responses and, for certain implementers in some settings, the achievement of policy goals" (Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002).

Developing a framework that supports the residency requirement using an adaptive approach as guidance documents to the LEARNS Act will allow for the type of situated implementation that leads to successful policy implementation. When the ADE develops a framework that acknowledges and makes space for the different contexts that exist within the stakeholder groups, those groups responsible for implementing the policy will be able to support the goals of LEARNS in ways that benefit the college students enrolled in teacher preparation programs in Arkansas, the institutes of higher education providing those teacher preparation programs and ultimately the students in Arkansas to a greater extent than if this policy would be implemented without situational contexts as part of the implementation plan. This has worked in other states (Chu, 2022, NCTR, 2017). An example of this is Louisiana's work with teacher residency programs

and sensemaking, whereas multiple factors and models can achieve teacher residency

results using a framework of flexible variables and non-negotiables (Chu, 2022). We

recommend that the ADE engage in a feedback process with stakeholders to identify

these variables and steadfast characteristics.

Honig (2009) and Wieck (1995) both emphasize the importance of sensemaking

for stakeholders and the acknowledgment of the complexity of implementation across

settings. Using the idea of what works, for whom, under what circumstances, and in

what areas while implementing the framework to accompany the LEARNS Act Teacher

Residency requirement will ultimately support the state's goal of prepared teachers in

every classroom in Arkansas.

Recommendation 2: Establish clear guidelines that articulate the fundamental

attributes of the teacher residency program required by the LEARNS act, creating

a well-defined framework for all stakeholders to use for sensemaking.

Chu (2022) argues that there is no consistent definition of teacher residencies, as

many different models exist (Berry et al., 2008, as cited in Chu, 2022). However, there

are two core tenets that most programs embrace: the teacher resident is mentored by a

highly qualified teacher, and the teacher resident is typically mentored within the

classroom for one school year. Growing evidence suggests that these components are

just the basics and several other characteristics are key for success, including the nine

levers earlier identified by the NCTR. More recently, in 2022, the Pathways Alliance

Teacher Residency Working Group created a national definition of teacher residencies

as a pathway to teacher preparation as a co-constructed program designed by local education agencies and teacher preparation programs to provide high-quality and affordable opportunities for teacher residents while supporting the local schools for which they are serving. The definition specifies that residents are not teachers of record; rather, they work with their mentor teacher to understand the many roles and responsibilities teachers have within the school throughout the year (Pathways Alliance, 2022). Given the differences between varying teacher residency definitions and models, the Arkansas Department of Education, in collaboration with the IHEs and LEAs, must develop clear guidelines around their teacher residency program that can be clearly communicated, understood, and used for continuous sensemaking for implementation (Chu, 2022).

As how educational policies are communicated to educational administrators impacts their understanding of the policy (Russell & Bray, 2013, as cited in Chu, 2022) and how they, in turn will share their understanding with their students (Cohen et al., 2020, as cited in Chu, 2022), Educational policymakers should recognize and address the complexity of designing a teacher residency to encourage and foster collaboration for a collective understanding (Chu, 2022). Sensemaking will be important because it will help create the flexibility for ongoing changes, shifts, and adaptations needed to implement a statewide teacher residency program (Weick, et al., 2005, as cited in Chu, 2022).

Recommendation 3: Support IHEs in implementing equitable teacher residencies with contextual adaptations by offering professional learning opportunities, incentives, and additional resources.

Studies on statewide implementation indicate states can support the implementation of high-quality teacher residency programs through their existing authority and flexibility granted by the Every Student Succeeds Act. The National Center for Teacher Residencies (2017) highlights components states can impact through policy considerations, including partnership and collaboration, resident recruitment and selection, and coaching and feedback.

Strong, authentic partnerships between districts and IHEs, characterized by missions supporting collaboration and mutual professional development and defined by an articulation agreement, are essential to a teacher residency model (NAPDS, 2021; Washburn-Moses, 2017). In light of data from focus groups, interviews, and questionnaire responses, IHE leaders need ADE's support to establish and maintain such relationships, particularly in the context of rural areas, as their connections are primarily consolidated within larger suburban and urban districts with which they have historically partnered with to support student teachers or interns. Further, Arkansas's IHE leaders seek clear expectations for such partnerships. States can facilitate collaboration between IHEs and districts by clearly defining expectations for each entity to ensure conformity among critical stakeholders. Additionally, the state can establish an enabling environment by offering incentives and facilitating collaborative meetings to

support the unique needs of IHEs and districts in varying contexts across the state

(NCTR, 2017). The ADE should use its framework to clearly communicate partnership

requirements while providing additional support to encourage partnerships for IHEs and

districts in areas struggling to build connections.

The National Center for Teacher Residencies (2017) asserts the recruitment and

selection of effective mentor teachers, those with a demonstrated impact on student

learning who can model effective practice, is crucial to the success of teacher residency

implementation because new teachers must emerge from preparation programs

learner-ready. Mentors should be selected based on their proven display of best

teaching practices and track record for improving student outcomes (NCTR, 2017).

Further, authentic teacher placement experiences under the guidance of strong mentor

teachers are vital to the success of both rural and urban teacher residency models (Pike

& Carli, 2020). Given the number of mentor teachers required to support all upcoming

residents in Arkansas, the ADE will be required to recruit, select, and train many new

mentor teachers. States can support mentor teachers by offering professional growth

opportunities for mentors, such as specialized training or networking, to empower them

further to refine their teaching expertise on an ongoing basis (NCTR, 2017).

Additionally, Arkansas, like other states, can increase equitable access to

qualified teachers by prioritizing recruiting and pairing highly motivated candidates with

a genuine interest in serving high-needs areas with high-quality mentors in those areas

and communicating the unique, situated assets present in those communities (NCTR,

2017; Valente et al., 2022). Data from focus groups, interviews, and questionnaire responses indicate IHEs may be inclined to cluster resident placements due to the administrative burden of site coordination; however, the ADE can support IHEs in developing intentional mentorship pairings by providing additional staff and well-defined requirements to IHEs to oversee residents at a variety of sites.

The ADE has the opportunity to facilitate strong partnerships between IHEs and districts and encourage intentional mentor recruitment, selection, and support by clearly defining expectations for IHEs, districts, mentors, and residents; further, AHEs can support contextual adaptations for high-needs areas by facilitating meetings between IHEs and districts, offering incentives and resources to entities and staff, and offering ongoing professional growth opportunities.

Recommendation 4: Identify accessible funding sources for financial long-term sustainability of teacher residency programs.

Teacher residency programs are funded in various contexts depending on federal, state and local needs, policies, and funding resources. Forward Arkansas's 2023 State of Education in Arkansas Report highlighted the need for the state's policymakers to explore funding opportunities used by other states to address the need for greater incentive programs and sustainable funding for teacher residencies. States such as Tennessee, Louisiana, and New Mexico have addressed funding needs using federal and state funding to implement various incentive programs. Incentives such as tuition remission, stipends, student loan forgiveness, and housing compensation help

attract and retain highly qualified teachers, mentors, and aspiring teachers involved in

teacher residency programs (Guha & Darling-Hammond, 2017). In a 2022 external

evaluation of the Albuquerque Teacher Residency Partnership, The National Center for

Teacher Residencies recommended New Mexico transition funding from a one-time

legislative award to an annual line item in the state's operational budget (Scheib &

Rowland, 2022). The National Center for Teacher Residencies underscores the

importance of planning for long-term financial sustainability of teacher residencies in

their 2018 Design For Impact guidance report (Appendix G).

In the fall of 2022, the Arkansas Department of Education announced the state

was awarded $2.2 million from the U.S. Department of Labor for the state's Teacher

Residency *Apprenticeship* Program. Although the name is similar, the purpose and

criteria of the program differ from the new state-mandated teacher residency. Apprentice

teachers are hired by the school district and paid a wage during their residency while

they work to complete their college coursework and requirements for licensure.

Teachers are actively recruited to teach in areas struggling with extreme teacher

shortages and socio-economic disadvantage to provide better educational opportunities

for these underserved communities. The funding for this program covers the cost of

tuition for approximately 100 first- and second-year students and 100 juniors and

seniors. It provides $2,500 for the lead teacher mentoring the student teacher in the

program.

Given the new teacher residency model the state is adopting, which requires all teachers to complete a one-year residency for certification, the number of teacher residents and associated costs will drastically increase well beyond the number of participants and federal funds allocated for the *apprenticeship* program. In light of the disparities between the federally funded Teacher Residency Apprenticeship Program and the Teacher Residency state initiative, it is recommended that the state seek additional sources of funding through federal sources such as grants and public-private partnerships. Prioritizing and increasing state funding in the operational budget will also help support the teacher residency's financial sustainability and long-term benefits.

Overall Recommendation: Partner with a national teacher residency support organization experienced in statewide teacher residency implementation to support the ADE in creating an organizational framework, establishing teacher residency guidelines, offering professional learning opportunities, incentives, additional resources, and identifying accessible funding sources.

As noted above, the interviews with ADE teacher residency experts and historians indicated that the ADE faces a number of barriers to creating an organizational framework, establishing teacher residency guidelines, offering professional learning opportunities, incentives, additional resources, and identifying accessible funding sources at the pace desired by IHEs to support their implementation, This also includes issues around teacher residency programs, including limited staff and requirements for bureaucratic approval of technical assistance materials. National

teacher residency support organizations offer opportunities to collaborate with a network

of entities implementing and sustaining teacher residencies. Organizations and

research laboratories engaged in the study of a particular line of inquiry are able to

accumulate rich situated knowledge around best practices in a variety of cases and

contribute to a broader body of knowledge (Honig, 2009). These organizations can

support the development of technical assistance materials and reduce the need for

increased staff support at ADE by sharing findings and best practices from within their

network of teacher residency programs.

Further, such a network can allow ADE to learn from other states implementing

statewide teacher residency requirements. Networks enable those involved in teacher

education to learn from their peers how to implement practices successfully in various

contexts (Zeichner, 2010). Similarly situated states may be able to teach the ADE about

professional learning opportunities, incentives, resources they offer, and funding

sources they have accessed to support teacher residency implementation.

While there are numerous national teacher residency support organizations, the

National Center for Teacher Residencies has experience with statewide implementation.

The National Center for Teacher Residencies seeks to develop and sustain high-quality

teacher residency programs by offering technical assistance to new and existing

programs, developing and providing programmatic support to existing residencies,

implementing policy and advocacy initiatives to improve awareness and sustainability of

the teacher residency model, disseminating best practices from residencies, and

supporting residencies' ongoing assessment and evaluation (NCTR, 2018). NCTR's'

2022-2023 Annual Report indicates the organization supports forty-seven network

teacher residency programs. Additionally, NCTR welcomed twenty-two aspiring teacher

residency programs into its residency design academy in 2022. These network and

aspiring programs are located in twenty-six states and are estimated to have graduated

over 9,000 teacher residents. Moreover, NCTR's programs prepare a greater

percentage of teachers of color than the national percentage of teachers who identify as

teachers of color. Their graduates teach in high-needs subject areas at a higher

percentage than all teachers nationally (NCTR, 2023).

By partnering with a national teacher residency support organization, such as

NCTR, the ADE can expediently address these recommendations to develop and

sustain equitable teacher residency implementation statewide.

Conclusion

This project sought to explore the situated implementation of teacher residency

programs in IHEs in Arkansas. The ADE desired guidance to support equitable

statewide implementation of teacher residency programs following the teacher

residency requirement outlined in the LEARNS Act. Early on in our partnership, the ADE

acknowledged disparities in teacher certification across the state and recognized

statewide teacher residency implementation required an understanding of the varying

contexts in which teacher residencies will be implemented. Further, the ADE sought to

determine the non-negotiable elements of teacher residencies, regardless of context,

and those that allowed for flexibility in varying contexts.

Our study employed qualitative research to examine the contexts in IHEs across

the state and a literature review to discover effective teacher residency practices so that

we could provide recommendations regarding the elements of teacher residencies that

require implementation with integrity and those that can be adapted to meet IHE's

contextual needs. Our findings will allow the ADE to gain awareness of the barriers and

facilitators to teacher residency implementation in the varying contexts of IHEs and the

ADE support sought by IHEs to ensure equitable teacher residency implementation. Our

recommendations can inform the ADE's next steps to support IHEs through clear

guidance and resource provision. Ultimately, these efforts can improve teacher

preparation to support equitable teacher certification for students across the state.

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Appendix A

Focus Group Protocol for IHE Staff responsible for teacher credentialing/residencies

Contexts of IHEs in Arkansas for Teacher Residency Program Implementation

Student Demographics (People as Implementation Influences)

1. Please tell me about yourself and your organization.

    o   What is the demographic makeup of your organization?

    o   What is the demographic makeup of the K-12 student population served by your organization's teacher preparation program?

Situated Implementation (Policy as Implementation Influences)

2. Tell me about when you first learned about the year-long teacher residency requirement.

    o   How did you feel about this policy?

    o   How do others in your organization feel about this change?

3. What do you understand about a teacher residency as required by this policy?

    o   What features will be implemented well within your IHE?

    o   What features may need to be adapted by IHE to implement this policy?

Capacity of Teacher Preparation Programs (Places as Implementation Influences)

4. Describe your role in implementing the teacher residency.

    o   Have you received any training in the last 24 months regarding teacher residencies? Policy implementation?

5. Is your organization prepared to implement teacher residencies?

    o   What personnel and financial resources are allocated to implementing teacher residencies?

6. What support does your organization need to implement teacher residencies?

Appendix B

Interview Protocol for Field Experts

Background

1. Please tell me about yourself and your role.

2. What is your experience with teacher residencies?

Characteristics of Effective Residencies

3. What features must a teacher residency have in place to be successful?

4. How do institutes of higher education support those features?

Situated Implementation

5. What features of teacher residencies might change given the context in which they are implemented?

    o   What features may be specific to urban residencies?

    o   What features may be specific to suburban residencies?

    o   What features may be specific to rural residencies?

State Support for Characteristics of Effective Residencies

6. How can states help institutes of higher education and school districts make sense of teacher residencies?

7. What supportive measures does a state need to have in place to help institutes of higher education implement teacher residencies?

Appendix C

Interview Protocol for Historian/ADE Experts

Background

1. Please tell me a little about yourself and your professional role with teacher credentialing.

2. What is your experience with teacher residencies?

3. What information do you have about the new policy in AR for teacher residencies? How has this been communicated across the state?

4. What patterns have you observed with providing HQ teachers across AR throughout your career?

Characteristics of Effective Residencies

5. What is the state-level goal for teacher residencies?

6. How do institutes of higher education currently support those goals in AR, and what needs to change?

Situated Implementation

7. What data do you have about successful residencies and teacher credentialing in AR?

8. What features of teacher residencies might change given the context in which they are implemented?

   ▪ What features may be specific to urban residencies?

   ▪ What features may be specific to suburban residencies?

   ▪ What features may be specific to rural residencies?

State Support for Characteristics of Effective Residencies

9. Can you provide historical context around successes and barriers to teacher residencies and certifications in AR?

10. What supportive measures help remove barriers when partnering with IHEs and local districts?

Appendix D

Questionnaire Protocol for IHE Staff

Contexts of IHEs in Arkansas for Teacher Residency Program Implementation

Staff and Student Demographics (People as Implementation Influences)

1. Describe your role in the teacher preparation program's internship or student teaching model.

2. Describe the K-12 student population served by your organization's teacher preparation program.

Situated Implementation (Policy as Implementation Influences)

3. Describe the key components of internships or student teaching at your organization.

4. How has your organization's internship or student teaching model evolved?

5. What training have you received regarding teacher residencies?

6. How do you think your organization's internship or student teaching model at your organization must change to implement teacher residencies?

The capacity of Teacher Preparation Program (Places as Implementation Influences)

7. What do you think has contributed to the success of internships or student teaching at your organization?

8. How do those components support teacher residencies at your organization?

9. What barriers may limit the success of the teacher residency at your organization?

10. What support from the state might address those barriers?

Appendix E

Code Descriptions and Definitions

Code	Code Definition
Policy as Implementation Influences	Participants directly or indirectly reference the LEARNS Act or other teacher residency policies' influence on teacher residency implementation.
People as Implementation Influences	Participants directly or indirectly reference stakeholders' influence on teacher residency implementation.
Places as Implementation Influences	Participants directly or indirectly reference institutions', localities', and regions' influence on teacher residency implementation.
Partnering and Designing for Equity	Participants directly or indirectly reference establishing or sustaining organizational partnerships with community stakeholders, including schools, districts, and communities, and/or designing a teacher residency from a straightforward, shared mission and vision.
Training Site Recruitment, Selection, and Support:	Participants directly or indirectly reference recruiting and/or selecting training sites and/or providing ongoing support to training sites to connect coursework and fieldwork.
Mentor Recruitment, Selection, and Support:	Participants directly or indirectly reference recruiting and/or selecting mentors representative of students and staff and/or supporting mentors to advance as teacher leaders.
Resident Recruitment and Selection	Participants make direct or indirect references to recruiting and/or selecting residents representative or students and staff.
Residency Leadership	Participants make direct or indirect references to making decisions, collaborating with stakeholders, and/or advocating for the residency at an organizational level.
Residency Year Experience	Participants directly or indirectly refer to identifying, teaching, and/or assessing high-priority resident practices and/or using a gradual release model to focus on increased resident responsibilities.
Financial Sustainability	Participants directly or indirectly refer to developing a financial model that is equitable and enticing to residents.
Graduate Support	Participants make direct or indirect references to coaching, supporting, and/or mentoring graduates after they have left the program.
Barriers to Implementation	Participants refer to anything that impedes the implementation of the lever being discussed by the participant.

| Facilitators to Implementation | Participants refer to anything that supports the implementation of the lever being discussed by the participant. |

Appendix F

IHE Staff Questionnaire Recruitment Email

We are doctoral candidates at Vanderbilt University. As part of our doctoral studies, we are working with the Arkansas Department of Education as they consider how to support institutes of higher education in implementing the teacher residency requirements of Executive Order 23-08 to prioritize L.E.A.R.N.S. (literacy, empowerment, accountability, readiness, networking, and school safety).

We invite you to complete a questionnaire for this study because of your role in a teacher preparation program with an institute of higher education. We are interested in your perceptions and experiences in your organization as they relate to the capacity of teacher preparation programs to implement teacher residencies. The questionnaire should take about 30 minutes. Participation is voluntary, and your responses will be stored securely and kept confidential. You will have the option to not respond to any question that you choose.
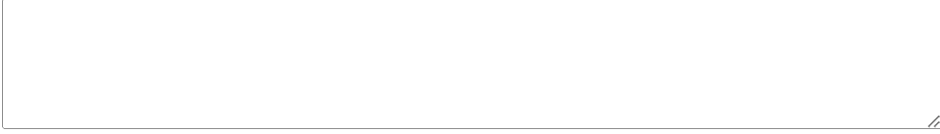
Please respond with your interest in participation by August 21, 2023. Upon receiving your response, we will provide a link to the questionnaire. We are happy to provide a copy of the questionnaire if you would like to review it before confirming your interest in participation. If you have any questions about the project, please contact Shannon Elders via email at shannon.r.elders@vanderbilt.edu or (615) 891-9941. You may also contact our faculty advisor, Dr. Michael Neel, at michael.a.neel@vanderbilt.edu. This project is associated with IRB #230977.

This questionnaire seeks to inform Vanderbilt University doctoral students working with the Arkansas Department of Education to consider how to support institutes of higher education in implementing the teacher residency requirements of Executive Order 23-08 to prioritize L.E.A.R.N.S. (literacy, empowerment, accountability, readiness, networking, and school safety).
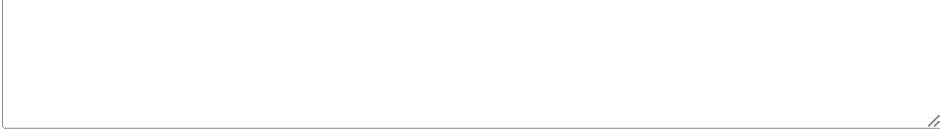
You have been invited to complete this questionnaire because of your role in a teacher preparation program with an institute of higher education. We are interested in your perceptions and experiences in your organization as they relate to the capacity of teacher preparation programs to implement teacher residencies. The questionnaire should take about 30 minutes. Participation is voluntary, and your responses will be stored securely and kept confidential. You will have the option to not respond to any question that you choose. Please complete this questionnaire by August 31, 2023.

→

Describe your role in the internship or student teaching model of your organization's teacher preparation program.

Describe the K-12 student population served by your organization's teacher preparation program.

← →

Describe the key components of internships or student teaching at your organization.

How has the internship or student teaching model at your organization evolved over time?

What training have you received regarding teacher residencies?

How do you think the internship or student teaching model at your organization must change to implement teacher residencies?

← →

What do you think has contributed to the success of internships or student teaching at your organization?

How do you think those components may support teacher residencies at your organization?

What barriers may limit the success of the teacher residency at your organization?

What support from the state might address those barriers?

← →

If you are interested in receiving information about our findings and recommendations this winter, please provide your email address.

← →

Appendix G

NCTR Design For Impact (In part)

Design For Impact: Section 1

Defining Financial Sustainability

NCTR defines financial sustainability in terms of two buckets, Financial Capacity — having the resources needed to seize opportunities while maintaining current operations; and, Resistance to Financial Shocks — resiliency to occasional, short-term funding challenges. If a program can do both those things, then it will be financially sustainable and can maintain or expand services over time.

**FINANCIAL
CAPACITY**

Having the resources needed
to seize opportunities while
maintaining current operations

**RESISTANCE TO
FINANCIAL SHOCKS**

Resiliency to occasional,
short-term economic shocks

**FINANCIAL
SUSTAINABILITY**

The ability to maintain or expand
services over time in response to
opportunities and threats

When programs want to evaluate their financial sustainability, they should focus on four questions:

Financial Capacity	Resistance to Financial Shocks
1. **Are revenues greater than expenses?** Put another way, can you pay your bills month after month and year after year?	3. **Are recurring revenues greater than recurring expenses?** Ideally, programs can rely on receiving the same revenue stream year after year with relative confidence. Though no funding source is guaranteed, some — like funding from regular per-pupil funds — are more reliable than others. Temporary grant funding can be particularly helpful during transitional times with temporary expenses (e.g. startup, expansion), but relying on it to cover regular, recurring expenses sets programs up for a funding cliff when those grants end.
2. **Are variable revenues greater than variable expenses?** Even if revenues exceed expenses, a residency program will only be able to expand if variable revenues match or exceed variable expenses each year, meaning that revenues grow as the number of residents grows. If variable revenues do not meet or exceed variable revenues, the program will be stuck at its current size or must identify additional fundraising to support growth.	4. **Are revenues diverse?** Programs that rely mostly or entirely on a single revenue source are susceptible to financial shocks. Just like in the stock market, more diversity in revenue sources is better than less to hedge against unexpected problems.

NCTR DESIGN FOR IMPACT: DESIGNING A RESIDENCY PROGRAM FOR LONG-TERM FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY   2

Design For Impact: Section 2

Capturing Cost-Savings

Residency programs recruit and train teachers to work in some of the nation's hardest-to-staff schools and subject areas. With each vacancy a residency graduate fills, the less districts must invest to do the same.

The Landscape

Teachers who participate in residency programs stay in districts longer. Across NCTR's partner programs, in 2017, 86 percent of residency graduates continued teaching in high-need schools after three years, and 69% continued in the classroom after five years. In contrast, a 2013 longitudinal study found that just 58 percent of new teachers remained in teaching after five years across all types of schools, not just hard-to-staff schools where attrition tends to be even higher.[1] Residency graduates also tend to produce better student outcomes compared to other new teachers. In Memphis, for example, graduates of the Memphis Teacher Residency scored one effectiveness level higher on Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) measures, with an average level of "Above Average Effectiveness" as compared to other novice Shelby County Schools teachers with five years of experience or less.[2] In sum, early evidence shows that residency programs produce successful teachers that fill key positions and save districts money in the process. There are significant benefits to children as well, in terms of improved teaching quality and reduced churn in teacher staffing.

The Problem

Most residency programs to date have received little to no district funding, even as they generate cost-savings for districts. When residency programs fail to capture some portion of the cost-savings they produce, two main issues arise:

1. **FINANCIAL INSECURITY.** Many, if not most, districts across the country face tight budgets and are looking for any opportunity to cut costs. And residency programs have their own financial obstacles; they often depend on philanthropic and/or grant funding that are time limited. When a district chooses to retain all the cost-savings a residency program produces, the residency program loses out on a key funding source that makes its revenue stream less diverse and more susceptible to shocks.

2. **BARRIER TO GROWTH.** The cost-savings residency programs produce for school and district partners represent an ideal revenue source because it is both recurring (happens every year) and variable (increases as the number of residents increases). When programs can operate off of recurring, variable funding, they can use philanthropic and other short-term funding for temporary expenses, like creating the infrastructure necessary to grow. But without such funding, growth becomes much more difficult.

What about district-led residencies? Although the school district ultimately funds district-led residency programs, the concept of capturing cost-savings can still be applicable. District-led residency programs generally have their own budgets and must work with district leadership to secure funding each year. There may, therefore, be an opportunity to capture some of the savings to other departments that the residency program accrues, such as from talent, human resources, or professional development, to sustainably fund the residency over the long-term.

1   **Ingersoll, R., & Merrill, E. (2013).** *Seven trends: The transformation of the teaching force.* CPRE report. Philadelphia: Consortium for Policy Research in Education, University of Pennsylvania.

2   **National Center for Teacher Residencies (2016).** *2015 Network Impact Overview.* Chicago, IL: Author. Retrieved from https://nctresidencies.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/NCTR-2015-Network-Impact-Overview.pdf

Design For Impact: Section 3

Sharing Responsibility for Stipends

In a residency partnership there is shared ownership of teacher training between all partners, as well as shared cost savings from the graduates the program produces. Shared responsibility for expenses must also exist and NCTR has identified that there are often supportive policy conditions and available funding for the partnering district to pay some portion of resident and mentor stipends.

The Landscape

In the NCTR Network today, short-term grant funding generally covers most resident stipends, and this expense is one of the largest cost centers for programs. Although there is no magic ratio, residency programs should aim to cover as much of their program costs using recurring (available every year) and variable (increasing as the number of residents increases) funding as possible. With resident stipends generally comprising the largest line item in program budgets, sharing or shifting responsibility for who pays those stipends has a tremendous impact on a program's financial sustainability.

The Problem

When grant funding is used to cover all or most of resident and mentor stipends, regardless of the stipend amount, two major issues arise:

1. **FINANCIAL INSECURITY.** Time limited grants eventually come to an end. In the best of circumstances, residency programs know they will face a funding cliff when a grant runs out. In the worst of circumstances, a grant may end suddenly, leaving programs scrambling to find replacement dollars. To make matters worse, because many residency programs rely on just a few funding sources, they are particularly vulnerable to funding cuts or an economic downturn.

2. **BARRIER TO GROWTH.** Successful programs should be able to flourish, grow, and produce even more great teachers. Unfortunately, a program's funding situation can make it very difficult, if not impossible, to scale. The philanthropic and grant funds many current programs rely on to operate are fixed,

meaning that funding doesn't increase as the number of residents increases. Consequently, most residency programs are stuck with the funding they have, which doesn't allow them to grow and increase their impact without finding new funding sources. Ideally, residency programs would receive some regular per pupil allotment that is not particularly susceptible to cuts, and that increases as the number of residents increases.

A Better Alternative

In a more sustainable model, districts or schools would contribute part or all of the funding for resident stipends. Rather than "finding" new dollars, a more likely source is current dollars and reallocating regular, per-pupil funds.

The Nashville Teacher Residency works with multiple charter school partners, all of whom pay a minimum resident stipend of $25,000. The partners recognize that residents provide critical support like Response To Intervention instruction and deliver special education and English language learner services that make them worth the investment — especially when those residents are hired at the school after they finish their training. Similarly, Metro Nashville Teacher Residency worked with their district partner, Metro Nashville Public Schools, to have schools participating in a new initiative pay resident stipends out of their operating budgets (**See box, Nashville Aspiring Teacher Program**). Another option is for the district to re-allocate funding from elsewhere in the budget to cover resident and mentor stipends. While likely a harder pitch to districts given the many programs and initiatives seeking funding, it is always worth considering inefficiencies or other regular funding streams that could support your work.

Design For Impact: Section 4

Reducing Stipend Levels

Resident stipends are critical recruitment and retention tools. They offer residency participants something that traditional teacher preparation programs do not — the ability to make a (modest) living while earning a degree. Programs also use mentor stipends to attract highly-effective, experienced teachers and to recognize their contribution to the development of residents.

The Landscape

It can be challenging for residency programs to set the resident and mentor stipend levels so they achieve programmatic goals and maintain financial sustainability. Ideally, stipend levels should be set at an amount that allows the residency program to meet its recruitment targets for the number and diversity of candidates, and for applicant quality. For experienced educators who will act as mentors, the role is quite different from that in traditional teacher preparation program: the resident is in the mentor's classroom full-time for ten months, and the mentor has the dual role of acting as a teacher educator while maintaining responsibility for student progress.

The Problem

Resident and mentor stipends usually make up the biggest line items in a residency program's budget. For many current residency programs, however, stipend levels reflect temporary funding available in the program's early years, but that may phase out over time. Setting high stipends when programs are flush and basing them on cash-on-hand, may mean that the stipend is higher than needed to meet recruitment goals. This results in inflated overall costs. Moving forward, programs may struggle to raise enough funding to cover stipend costs year after year, creating several issues:

1. **HIGHER COST PER RESIDENT.** Higher stipend levels translate into a higher costs per resident, which, in turn, increases the amount of time the residency program must spend fundraising.

A Note for New Residency Programs

The less it costs to prepare each resident, the more likely a program will be able to pay its bills each month. Though there is no magic number, it is preferable for a residency program to be less expensive rather than more expensive. Of course, cost is not the only consideration. Program quality, including the ability to recruit qualified and diverse candidates, is also key.

Obviously, it is not possible to reduce stipend levels if you haven't set them yet. However, the guidance in this section around adjusting resident stipends also applies to setting the initial level. This section also includes some common pitfalls others have faced.

2. **LIMITED GROWTH.** When programs allocate more money than is needed to resident and mentor stipends, it limits the program's capacity to invest in evaluating and extending its impact.

3. **LESS NEGOTIATING POWER.** High stipend costs can also diminish a program's negotiating power when working to shift responsibility for the stipend to the school or district (**See "Sharing Responsibility for Stipends"**). The school or district will be less likely to pay stipends if they experience sticker shock from a high price.

Design For Impact: Section 5

Negotiating to Lower Tuition Costs

Attracting excellent candidates to a residency program requires a compelling value proposition with multiple components. As discussed in Reducing Stipend Levels, setting a reasonable and sustainable stipend level is important to recruitment. Equally important is the candidates' investment in program tuition paid to a university partner.

The Landscape

Though most residency programs do not necessarily bear the burden of tuition costs directly, tuition is a significant part of the overall cost per resident and the larger value proposition of the residency program to candidates. Tuition costs of university partners, or other course providers, vary greatly, ranging from economical to astronomical. Too often, residency programs choose to work with university partners based on proximity or reputation, with little regard for cost. But cost does matter, and in almost every case, there is more than one institution of higher education (IHE) partner option from which residency programs can choose.

The Problem

High tuition costs can lead to two significant issues for residency programs, including:

1. **DETERRING HIGH-QUALITY CANDIDATES.** Residency programs focus on recruiting high-quality candidates from diverse backgrounds. These candidates need a pathway into teaching that is affordable. High tuition costs can make a program less attractive to applicants, especially those balancing financial constraints. High tuition means that candidates may choose to enter the program but graduate with significant debt. Alternatively, candidates may choose a different preparation program offering a degree for a lower price, or decide against teaching altogether.

2. **INCREASING PROGRAM COSTS.** Some residency programs choose to add to the candidate value proposition and offset the financial burden of tuition by covering all or part of tuition payments on behalf of residents. But every dollar the residency program spends on tuition is another dollar it must raise, undermining the program's financial sustainability.

A Better Alternative

Lower tuition is preferable to higher tuition for both residents and residency programs. While there is no magic number when it comes to tuition, the case can be made that any tuition rate substantially above the national average of $15,000 is worth reconsidering. Programs must also evaluate the starting salary for new teachers, and the pace and time required to pay back significant education costs.