


# INVESTING IN NEW TEACHERS





## EARLY LESSONS FROM THE PARTNERSHIP FOR LA SCHOOLS' TEACHER RESIDENCY PROGRAM


California faces a **teacher shortage crisis** that particularly impacts students of color in high-need schools where great teaching is needed most.


 Last year the highest-need schools in Los Angeles schools had twice as many unfilled **vacancies** as the lowest-need schools.

**Teacher residency programs** are one of the most promising strategies to address this crisis and strengthen pipelines for teachers of color.

 Residents spend a full year working side-by-side with an experienced teacher to learn the craft and prepare to lead their own classroom.


 Residents are more likely to come from the community they serve and more likely to continue to teach in the same school community, which is invaluable as we look to build a diverse workforce that better reflects the communities we serve.


 Schools that host residents benefit from having an additional caring adult in the classroom, at little or no cost to school.

 California policymakers have **invested** hundreds of millions of dollars in the expansion of teacher residency programs.


### Partnership for LA Schools Teacher Residency

The Partnership for LA Schools has teamed up with Alder Graduate School of Education and LA Unified to create a new teacher residency program aimed at developing teachers of color to serve in high-need LA Unified schools.

 Currently in its second year with 13 residents, the Partnership for LA Schools Teacher Residency program is growing to train 25 new teachers a year.

 In the most recent cohort:

- 85% of residents are people of color
- 67% are first-generation college students
- 67% are Pell grant recipients

 From the first cohort, 100% are now teaching in LA Unified schools, and 80% are now teaching in Partnership schools.

“**Learning to teach is hard. But if you have a positive first year, you’re much more likely to stick around and become a great teacher.**”

—Thomas McGrail, Regional Managing Clinical Director, Alder Graduate School of Education

### Learning from the experience of new teachers

To learn about what’s working and how we can better support new educators, we interviewed:

**12** resident student teachers

**4** first year teachers who completed the residency program

**11** mentor teachers

**2** administrators who support the program







“If it wasn't for the residency program, it would be like I was dropped in a cornfield and left to find my own way. I don't think I would last.”

—Raul Ortiz, program graduate and teacher, Edwin Markham Middle



### Key ingredients for a successful residency program:




-  **Intentionally recruiting and building pathways into teaching:** Working closely with Alder, we've successfully recruited from within our school communities, including parents, paraeducators and people who grew up and live in the neighborhood.
-  **Strong mentors and mentor-mentee relationships:** The overwhelming majority of time and learning experiences for residents take place in the classroom with their mentor teacher. Residents need mentors who they can trust, learn from and reflect with.
-  **Community of new teachers:** Beyond learning the technical skills of teaching, residents need a community of peers who are experiencing common challenges and who can support each other.
-  **Program staff capacity:** The full-time residency director position is the cornerstone of the program, as they bring together the different pieces of the residency program into a coherent experience for residents. Residents need staff who can focus on and support their development.

“Teachers start with hope and love for kids. We have to support them to protect against being ground down by the system. Help them keep human, keep criticality, keep focused on what's best for kids.”

—Dr. Marcus Hughes, Director of Teacher Residency, Partnership for LA Schools

### Implications for schools and districts:

Successful programs to support new teachers require a paradigm shift in how we think about the teacher workforce:

-  Take a long-term view of attracting, developing and sustaining teachers instead of being reactive to last-minute vacancies and applying short-term hiring band-aids.
-  Make teacher's well-being and sustainability the top priority for new teacher support & development – the first few years of teaching are extremely challenging and our educators need to feel they're loved and supported as they build experience and skill.
-  Staff a full-time position to serve as the leader of teacher residencies, who can take ownership for the district's success when it comes to cultivating teachers in these programs.

### Words used by teachers to encapsulate their experience with the program:

 **Community**

 **Inspiring**

 **Relationships**

 **Stressful**

 **Struggle**

 **Insightful**

 **Transformative**

 **Challenging**

### WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

Advocate for stronger supports for early career teachers, particularly teachers of color teaching in high-need schools.

This brief is brought to you by The Len Hill Civil Rights Project at the Partnership for LA Schools — working to advance policy to ensure that all students access their civil right to a high-quality education.