Teacher Residencies as an Approach to Teacher Diversity

Promising Strategies for Recruiting and Retaining Black Educators

Robert Shand
American University
Naureen Madhani
Kimberly Austin
Columbia University

Abstract

Teacher residencies offer a promising approach to enhancing the recruitment, preparation, and retention of educators by addressing barriers to entering and succeeding in the teaching profession, especially among educators of color. In this paper, we examine strategies residencies might use to overcome the obstacles faced by Black educators. We draw upon a formative evaluation of the Black Educators Initiative, an investment in specific recruitment, preparation, and retention strategies to identify promising strategies for supporting Black educators. We also discuss policy and practice implications, including the importance of financial support, the role played by culturally responsive practices in teacher preparation, and the need to partner with schools and communities to support retention efforts.

Robert Shand is an Assistant Professor in the School of Education at American University, Washington, D.C. Naureen Madhani is Director of Research Strategy and Consulting in the Center for Public Research and Leadership, Columbia University, New York City, New York. Kimberly Austin is Senior Director of Research Strategy at the Center for Public Research and Leadership, Columbia University, and a Lecturer in Law with the Columbia Law School, New York City, New York. Email addresses: rshand@american.edu, nm2628@columbia.edu, & ka2616@columbia.edu

Introduction

Recognizing the impact of teachers on student learning, in recent years much policy and research attention has focused on the importance of teacher diversity as an important element of teacher quality (Gershenson et al., 2021) and driver of more equitable outcomes, especially for students of color (Carver-Thomas, 2018). Black teachers, in particular, are a key driver of more equitable outcomes for Black students (Papay et al., 2012; Schaeffer, 2021). Indeed, Black students who have just one Black teacher during elementary school are more likely to graduate from high school and consider going to college (Carver-Thomas, 2018). The positive impact of Black teachers on Black students can be explained by several factors, including a shared cultural understanding (Mitchell, 1998), higher expectations that Black teachers maintain for Black students (Gershenson et al., 2021), and culturally affirming pedagogical strategies, which Black teachers are more likely to use in the classroom (Bristol & Martin-Fernandez, 2019).

Nonetheless, in the 2017-2018 school year, just 7% of U.S. public-school teachers were Black and non-Hispanic, while 79% were White (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). Black teachers face barriers to entering the teaching profession, including lower high school and college graduation rates due to opportunity gaps (Carver-Thomas, 2018), as well as unsupportive working conditions that lead many to leave the profession (Grooms et al., 2021).

To address the shortage of Black teachers, the National Center for Teacher Residencies (NCTR) launched its Black Educators Initiative (BEI) in 2019. NCTR is committed to building and developing teacher residencies as a lever to address the enduring and systemic inequities in school systems. Through its BEI, NCTR provides grants and support to teacher residencies that dedicate funds to recruiting, preparing, and retaining Black educators. Teacher residency programs, a form of teacher preparation modeled on medical residencies and designed to improve training and early career supports, have the potential to address several of the obstacles that keep Black educators out of the classroom, but only if they are purposely designed with racial equity and justice at the forefront (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Ingersoll & May 2011; Ronfeldt et al., 2013; Silva, et al.; 2014; Simon & Johnson, 2015). Typically, teacher residents spend an academic year working in a classroom with mentor teachers and completing related coursework at a teacher preparation program. Residents receive financial support and are often required to teach for three to five years after program comple-

tion, with continued support from mentors (Hammerness, 2016).

We contribute to ongoing research on how teacher residency programs can be designed and implemented to support the recruitment, development, retention, and success of Black educators. Specifically, we share results from a preliminary evaluation of BEI that addresses these research questions:

1. To what extent are teacher residencies a promising vehicle for recruiting, preparing, supporting, and retaining effective Black educators?

2. What specific program design and implementation elements of the Black Educators Initiative are associated with recruitment, preparation, success, and retention of Black educators, according to preliminary quantitative and qualitative evidence?

Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

Barriers to Entry: Opportunities, Interests, and Funding

Even before teaching becomes a professional option, disparities in access to resources, effective teachers (Madkins, 2011), and other opportunities mean Black students are less likely to complete high school (Irwin, 2021) and less likely to enroll in or complete college than their White or Asian counterparts (DeAngelo et al., 2011; Ingersoll, 2001). Among Black students who are successful in college, teaching is often perceived as a relatively low-wage and low-status profession, especially for men (Graham & Erwin, 2011; Ingersoll, 2021). On average, Black teachers earn less than White teachers (Smith, 2021) and accumulate more post-secondary debt (Allegretto & Mishel, 2019).

If a Black educator decides to major in education, licensure exams can create another barrier to entry. Black test-takers have a lower pass rate than others—potentially due to the quality of post-secondary opportunities and cultural bias in the exams (Carver-Thomas, 2018, Tyler, 2011). The price of exams can also be cost-prohibitive, especially if multiple attempts are needed to pass the exam.

Barriers to Retention: Quality of Preparation and Work Conditions

During the last few decades, federal, state, and private efforts to increase the number of teachers of color have been successful. For example, from SY1987–88 to SY 2017–18, the number of Black teachers increased by 29%, while the number of Asian and Hispanic teachers increased by 263% and 373%, respectively (Ingersoll et al., 2021). However, proportionally, fewer Black teachers were joining the profession during this time. In addition, Black teachers leave the teaching profession at higher rates

than teachers from other racial groups due to feelings of under-preparation and school site working conditions (Campoli, 2017).

Several studies indicate that lack of adequate teacher preparation is one of the reasons for high teacher attrition rates (Grooms et al 2021; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Ingersoll et al., 2018; Ingersoll et al., 2021). For example, in a qualitative study of Black female teachers, Black women discussed concerns of limited knowledge related to special education programs, the absence of culturally responsive teaching strategies, and a lack of preparation to teach underserved youth (Farinde-Wu et al., 2019).

An Ed Trust study found that teachers of color faced an antagonistic work culture, felt undervalued and deprived of agency, and bore a high psychological and financial cost of being a teacher of color (Ed Trust & Teach Plus, 2019). Black teachers are more likely to report work conditions where they are pigeonholed by peers, parents, and administrators into specific roles such as disciplinarians (Amos, 2020), are professionally isolated (Bristol & Shirrell, 2019), or where they face microaggressions, sabotage, and surveillance (Amos, 2020; Grooms et al., 2021).

Approaches to Addressing the Barriers to Entry and Retention

The challenges facing Black teaching candidates are not unknown to education preparation programs or school systems. Attempts to address these challenges include interventions at every juncture of the professional pipeline, including incentives to lessen the financial impact of teachers' salaries (Scott & Alexander, 2019) and programs that link teaching candidates of color with those already in the profession (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Scott & Alexander, 2019).

Among these efforts, studies suggest that clinical preparation is critical to retention (Darling-Hammond, 2012; Zeichner, 1993). At least four large-scale studies that have examined the relationship between the duration of student teaching and self-reported preparedness to teach have found positive relationships between the two (Ronfeldt, 2021). A study of effective preparation programs in New York City revealed the hallmark features of impactful preparation, including careful oversight of the quality of student teaching experiences, an accurate representation of the classroom setting in which the student teacher will ultimately begin teaching, an opportunity for student teachers to study the district curriculum, and a capstone project (Boyd et al., 2009).

By combining the features of effective clinical preparation with mentorship and coursework, teacher residencies aim to address many of the barriers that keep teachers *from* classrooms, while providing

support to help keep them *in* classrooms. Residents in these programs typically spend a year in an apprentice-like role in a school with a mentor teacher, while also receiving ongoing support from the program and gradually taking on more responsibility in the classroom throughout the school year. Such support helps reduce feelings of isolation and burnout that often lead to teacher turnover (Matsko et al., 2022; Silva et al., 2014). In contrast, 78% of traditional teacher preparation programs include just a semester or more of clinical experience (Pomerance & Walsh, 2020). During this time, residents also complete aligned coursework at a local university or education preparation provider that leads to a degree and/or recommendation for a teaching license.

An expanding body of research suggest residency programs are effective in addressing the national teacher shortage, including the recruitment of Black teachers (Chu & Wang, 2022; Coffman, 2014; Darling-Hammond, 2012; Garza et al., 2014; Guha et al., 2017; Papay et al., 2012). For example, 23% of the active program completers of the Boston Teacher Residency (BTR) program identify as Black or African American compared to teacher preparation programs nationally, where just 10% of completers identify as Black or African American (Papay et al., 2012). This is a notable difference given that 71% of BTR residents who complete the program end up teaching in their districts through their sixth year in the profession, as compared to 51% of their non-residency counterparts (Papay et al. 2012). In a series of longitudinal studies of the Urban Teacher Residency (UTR) Project in New York, Rockman et al (2018) found that UTR teachers had a positive impact on student achievement and that UTR teachers stayed longer in the classroom than other New York City public high school teachers. Similarly, Roegman et al. (2017) found that in the fifth year, 85% of teacher residency graduates in their study were still teaching and 70% of these remained in the residency's partner district.

Black Educators Initiative (BEI) Residencies: A More Comprehensive Approach to Recruitment and Retention

Launched in 2019, NCTR's BEI initially provided additional funds to eight residencies in its network to facilitate innovative practices to recruit, prepare, and retain Black educators, in addition to their programming for other educators. Three years since its launch, the BEI program has expanded from eight residencies to 20 teacher residencies across NCTR's network.

Our study compared program data from 22 BEI residencies and 23 NCTR residencies that did not participate in BEI. We looked at admin-

istrative data on applications, selection, recruitment, participation, program completion, hiring, and retention, which were disaggregated by race beginning in 2020.

Levers Implemented by the BEI Residency Programs

Each year, BEI residencies leverage funds to enhance and inform their programs in three areas. First, residencies implement recruitment strategies targeted at attracting greater shares of Black candidates compared to traditional teacher residencies or other pathways into teaching. Second, they provide funding and create learning environments that address the financial and cultural barriers that often affect entry into the profession, respectively. Third, they invest in support mechanisms designed to increase the likelihood of retaining Black graduates of their programs, and, ultimately, their retention in the field.

Within each of these areas, BEI funding helps teacher residencies implement research-based and innovative practices to support Black educators. Residencies develop recruitment materials that highlight people of color and recruit at places with high percentages of Black people, such as historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). They also hire recruitment staff who share similar cultural experiences with candidates and provide high-touch support to Black candidates throughout the recruitment and selection process. Residencies also offer stipends, scholarships, and emergency funds, among other incentives or compensation, which allow Black residents to continue in the residency despite any financial hardships they may experience. Additionally, BEI programs offset cultural barriers to teaching by matching Black residents with effective mentor teachers and creating affinity groups that create spaces for residents to reflect on their racialized experiences with others who identify similarly. Lastly, BEI residencies support retention by helping Black residents secure teaching jobs as they near graduation and supporting them through their first few years' working as teachers.

In this exploratory study, we investigate the practices that all BEI residencies employed to identify promising practices for the recruitment and retention of Black educators as well as their success completing programs. We consider both the design and implementation of these practices. Residencies differ in the strategies and incentives that they use; we use this variation to explore practices that should be considered for scaling up, modifying, or discontinuing. Lastly, we consider the data residences might collect to inform a long-term research agenda for continuous improvement and sustainability of residency efforts.

All residencies provided their residents with scholarships, stipends, and mentor stipends of varying amounts, but differed in relative budgetary allocations. The number of residents and the duration of their experiences also varied. As an illustration of some of this variation, Table 1 provides an overview of the original eight BEI residencies, which we highlight in the findings. In order to protect their identity, pseudonyms have been used in place of residency names. Although not all programs lead to a degree, we refer to all program completers as graduates.

Methods

Using a concurrent triangulation, mixed-methods design, we analyzed qualitative and quantitative data to corroborate findings (Cresswell et al., 2003, p. 183). The quantitative and qualitative data also complement each other, offering a more complete response to the study's research questions. Taken together, these methods allowed us to more accurately understand the relationship between BEI program features and their impact on Black residents.

Data Sources

NCTR compiled data from its partner teacher residency programs, which comprise the eight original BEI residencies, 14 residencies that later joined BEI, and the remaining 23 residencies that did not partic-

Table 1
Overview of the Original Eight Residencies
Participating in the Black Educator Initiative

Name of residency*	Region	Duration of residency program	Number of residents in SY 2020–21
Asbury	West	1-year master's degree	19
Bayonne	Midwest	2-year master's degree	54
Caldwell	Northeast	2-year master's degree	9
Danbury	Southeast	2-year master's	21
Englewood	Southeast	1-year recommendation for teacher license	18
Franklin	Northeast	2-year master's degree	4**
Glassboro	Southeast	15-month master's degree	38
Haddonfield	Midwest	15-month master's degree	15

*Pseudonyms have been used in place of residency names in order to protect the identity of the residencies and their participants.
**Franklin did not have a residency program in SY 2020–21 so this number is from SY 2019–20

ipate in BEI as of spring 2022. These include demographic data on applications, acceptances and enrollment in the programs; resident satisfaction with program support and preparation; graduation rates, hiring rates, and 1-, 2-, and 3-year teacher retention rates, disaggregated by race and ethnicity at each stage of the process from 2020 onward.

NCTR administers an end-of-year (EOY) survey to residents, graduates and program completers ("graduates"), and principals. We primarily focus our analysis of surveys on residents' assessment of how well-prepared they felt to serve as a teacher of record after their residency concluded, rated on a scale of 1-4, representing "Not Prepared," "Somewhat Prepared," "Prepared," and "Very Well Prepared," respectively, as well as three questions that were selected in conjunction with NCTR to reflect evidence of perceptions of support and preparation: the extent to which residents agree that their program provides sufficient opportunities to practice what they learn in courses through clinical experience, the extent to which they feel valued and affirmed as an individual by their mentors, and the extent to which their coursework is relevant to their school and classroom contexts. Each of these is rated on a Likert scale from 1-4, ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree" with no neutral or middle option. We focus on the most recent survey results—the end-of-year 2022 surveys—with 642 responses overall and 172 responses from Black residents.

NCTR also gathered data from individual programs on how they allocated the additional funds they received to implement BEI strategies and what specific features each program had to explore reasons for variability across residencies and to generate hypotheses and questions for further research about promising specific strategies. These budgetary allocations and program features included: whether or not programs had a pool of emergency funds for residents, whether or not programs covered test preparation and additional professional development costs for Black residents, whether programs funded a pre-residency summer program, and whether programs had paid recruiters. Table 2 lists the number of programs that used each feature funded by BEI. We also analyze the association between the amount of stipend (not listed in Table 2 because all programs had stipends) and recruitment efforts.

Individual and focus group interviews with 78 residents, mentors, graduates, principals, and residency administrators across seven residency programs further helped us understand Black residents' perceptions of support and preparation. All residents, mentors, and graduates interviewed identified as Black. Of these, 53 represented BEI residencies and 25 represented non-BEI residencies. The semi-structured interviews lasted from 30 to 60 minutes.

Quantitative Analyses

We began quantitative analysis by descriptively analyzing patterns and trends in recruitment, selection, enrollment, and graduation, both over time and between residencies within BEI to note outliers, trends over time, and associations with program features and budgetary allocations, including stipend amount, using regression analysis. We then analyzed whether BEI residencies were successful at improving four outcomes for Black educators—recruitment, graduation, hiring, and retention—relative to other residency programs in the NCTR network. We did this by running a series of regressions of these outcomes on BEI status, using both all other NCTR residencies and only the subset of residencies that would later adopt BEI as comparison groups. For most outcomes, the relevant comparison is for Black educators in BEI versus Black educators in other NCTR residencies, though for some questions and models we also compare outcomes for all residents in BEI versus other residencies; for example, when some outcomes were not disaggregated by race in all years. Finally, we analyzed patterns in resident experience by race and perceptions of preparation by residents using survey data by employing two-sample, two-tailed *t*-tests for differences in mean survey outcomes by race and by participation in BEI programs.

Qualitative Analyses

We analyzed the focus group transcriptions and detailed interview notes to corroborate resident, graduate, mentor and principals' survey responses, focusing mostly on processes for recruitment, preparation, and retention, including post-program support. We also examined these data to identify promising practice in the design and implementation of BEI.

To do so, we analyzed the transcriptions and detailed notes in two stages. In the first stage, we generated a set of codes using "structural

Table 2
Program Features

Feature	Number of Programs (N=8)
Emergency Funds	6
Professional Development Funds	4
Test Preparation Costs	6
Pre-Residency Summer	1
Paid Recruiters	6

coding," which are codes that align with the research and interview questions to label and index data and, subsequently, identify similarities, differences, and relationships (Saldana, 2016). Next, we used "pattern coding" to identify emerging categories and themes related to recruitment, preparation, and retention (Saldana, 2016). Lastly, we compared this analysis with the quantitative analysis. In reporting the qualitative findings, pseudonyms are used for all residencies and for study participants.

Findings

Based on the analyses, there are several findings deemed worthy of sharing. BEI residencies are consistently successful at attracting both larger numbers and proportions of Black residents. A number of strategies used by these residencies were aimed at directly addressing the barriers to entry, such as lack of adequate support to enter the field and financial assistance. We also find that ongoing support provided during clinical practice helped Black residents complete their programs and enter the profession. BEI residencies, in particular, cultivated a sense of belonging among residents that was rooted in shared interest in social justice —an interest that in some cases was not present in residents' clinical practice schools. In this section, we describe these and other findings in greater detail.

BEI Recruitment Strategies

We address the first part of research question 1 on recruitment, "To what extent are teacher residencies a promising vehicle for recruiting, preparing, supporting, and retaining effective Black educators?" with a regression analysis comparing recruitment of Black residents in BEI to other NCTR residency programs. The raw number of Black residents recruited by BEI programs is marginally significant (p=0.089) compared with all other residencies, while the proportion of residents who are Black is statistically significant only when compared with programs that did not later adopt BEI. The original eight BEI residencies on average had 37 percent residents who were Black, compared with a baseline of 21 percent, for a gain of 16 percentage points. This was a statistically significant finding (p=0.012). Table 3 shows the relationship between the original eight BEI residencies and both the number and proportion of Black residents. Columns 1 and 2 include all other residencies in the comparison group. Columns 3 and 4 restrict the comparison to residencies that never joined BEI to avoid confounding the effects of those that later joined BEI (as noted above, residencies have

joined the BEI program every year since 2019 and this study focuses on the original eight that joined in 2019).

The row labeled "Constant" on the tables provides the baseline mean of each respective outcome for the relevant comparison group, while the row labeled "Original BEI" shows the change across the original eight BEI residencies. If a difference is statistically significant, or likely not due to chance alone, the number of asterisks corresponding to a particular alpha level of significance (denoted at the bottom of the table) is shown alongside the coefficient.

We examined whether the specific program features listed in the methods section, as well as the size of the stipend provided to residents, were significantly associated with more successful recruitment of Black resident among some BEI residencies than others; however, no specific program strategy or budgetary allocation was statistically significantly associated with both greater numbers and proportions of Black residents, likely due to the small sample of residencies.

Therefore, we focus on the qualitative analyses to address the second research question regarding specific strategies associated with effective recruitment, "What specific program design and implementation elements of the Black Educators Initiative are associated with recruitment, preparation, success, and retention of Black educators, according to preliminary quantitative and qualitative evidence?"

Table 3
Recruitment Numbers and Proportions by BEI Status, SY 2021–22

Comparison group	Original BEI vs. All Residencies		Original BEI vs. Other Residencies that Never Joined BEI	
	(1) Black residents	(2) Black proportion of residents	(3) Black residents	(4) Black proportion of residents
Original BEI	10.26* (5.98)	0.07 (0.06)	8.70 (8.28)	0.16** (0.06)
Constant	11.24*** (2.80)	0.31*** (0.03)	12.80** (4.93)	0.21*** (0.04)
Observations	100	100	62	62
R-squared	0.03	0.01	0.02	0.10

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p < .01
** p < .0
* p < .10

High-Quality Support and Care as Promising Recruitment Strategies

The qualitative data reveal that these recruitment gains were due to not simply recruiting more people by looking in more places or adding greater racial diversity on program materials but an intentional effort to cultivate relationships with prospective residents and demonstrate a caring approach. Program administrators used local networks to initiate and extend relationships with potential Black educators. They also recruited potential residents from the alumni networks of area high schools and partner K-12 schools and local organizations, such as religious institutions, education nonprofits, and community colleges. One BEI administrator said:

> Where we recruit is intentional. We partner very exclusively with K-12 schools that have a diverse population. We rely on … families in the community, paras [paraprofessionals], [and] school staff. (Harriet, BEI Administrator)

In addition to local networks and organizations, three of the eight BEI residencies recruited at HBCUs in SY 2019–20. One program administrator attributed their residency's recruitment success to its focus on HBCUs, saying:

> Number one reason is an increased focus among recruiting in places that [have a] high-percentage [of] persons of color or Black undergrads. We always recruited at HBCUs, but that went from part of our strategy to our main strategy. (Andre, BEI Administrator)

Once they identified places to recruit potential residents, five of the eight BEI residencies fostered relationships with them. These residencies provided prospective residents with consistent, proactive support throughout the application processes. For example, some residency staff met one-on-one with prospective residents and maintained ongoing communication with them via calls and texts. Although time intensive, one BEI Administrator explained the need to reframe recruitment from being focused on the number of people who enter residencies to caring deeply about potential residents throughout all stages of the program:

> We are able to have 'interest' meetings…[where] people [can] see this is a program that cares about me and isn't out to just give me a license. Our team is really committed to caring for our residents and showing that their humanity is honored. (Matteo, BEI Administrator)

Residents were motivated to apply when they connected with the person recruiting them or recommending the program to them, especially if the person was Black. Seeing and conversing with residency

staff members who were Black tended to build prospective residents' comfort and trust in the residency and motivated them to apply and enroll. One resident commented:

> I chose this [program] because there was more Black support. I felt shunned at the other [residency program]…At this program, there were more people of my color, so they understood me more. (Delilah, Resident)

Prospective residents also noticed when that care extended to communities of color. Specifically, potential residents were drawn to residencies with clear anti-racist or social justice messages on their websites and recruitment materials. One resident reported that this allowed them to trust that the residency really "cared about moving forward" on social justice issues, rather than just "the performance of moving forward" (Delilah, Resident). Bianca, another resident, noted how this consistency of these messages, which often extended to conversations with staff, helped build trust in the program's approach:

> I browsed around the [residency's] website and researched the school a bit. And, that was the thing that kept popping up—anti-racism, anti-racism—and I was like, 'Oh, wow, this [residency] seriously seems to care about supporting students and teachers of color.' So I was really interested in that. (Bianca, Resident)

Lastly, it is important to recognize the importance of financial assistance. Residents emphasized the role of stipends, scholarships, and other forms of financial support in their decisions to enroll in BEI programs. This is consistent with prior literature and quantitative results noting the significance of financial barriers to becoming an educator (Graham & Erwin, 2011; Ingersoll, 2021). One graduate said:

> One of the major things that attracted me [was that] they had a stipend for the duration of the study and also had different scholarships that supported the academic side of it. …I am a first generation [college student]. Only child in the family that's [college] educated. If I didn't have financial support, I'd still be a TA (teaching assistant). They gave me a pathway. Now, I will start on my doctorate, too. (Sara, Graduate)

Our quantitative analysis also underscores the importance of financial assistance. When we examined the relationship between the size of the stipend provided to residents and recruitment efforts in a regression, we find each $1,000 increment in stipend amount is associated with about a half percentage-point increase in the proportion of residents who are Black, as shown in Table 4. However, this finding is not statistically significant, with a p-value of 0.18, so it should be

viewed as preliminary and suggesting further study rather than conclusive.

Retention in the Program and Quality of Preparation

Because post-graduation hiring data were not disaggregated by race before the commencement of BEI in 2020, we can only test whether the overall number of graduates hired in partner districts and Title I schools changed in the original eight BEI programs. An average of 14 additional graduates of BEI residencies were hired in Title I schools and 24 additional graduates were hired in partner districts after BEI was implemented. As shown in Table 5, both coefficients are positive and the coefficient for graduates hired in partner districts is marginally statistically significant (p=0.07).

The importance of financial assistance was not limited to recruitment. BEI programs also dispersed emergency funds, which administrators noted often made the difference between "staying in the program or quitting" (Rizwana, BEI Administrator). Residents used the funds to pay for rent, a utility bill, or an unexpected expense.

Along with emergency funds, programs set aside money to cover the costs associated with obtaining their teaching license, which nationally can range from $100-$300 each (Carver-Thomas, 2018). Conversations with both residents and administrators reveal the importance of these funds for retention in the program and, ultimately, the profession. Below one administrator discusses this impact, explaining:

Table 4
Stipend Amount and Recruitment of Black Residents

	(1) *Black share of residents*
$1,000 in Stipend	0.004 (0.003)
Constant	0.27*** (0.08)
Observations	22
R-squared	0.09

Standard errors in parentheses:
*** p<0.01
** p<0.05
* p<0.1

> We use BEI funding to pay for Black residents testing fees and supports—tutoring, retakes, practice exams. The other biggest piece is our resident emergency fund…Every Black resident can access the emergency fund. Anywhere in America a $23,000 salary is living in poverty. We can ensure that basic needs are met. (Linda, BEI Administrator)

While financial support is crucial for entering and staying in the profession, several factors create an enabling environment for the retention of Black teachers. Next, we review the role of non-financial supports in creating this enabling environment.

BEI Residencies and Clinical Practice

In general, resident assessments of preparation on a scale of 1-4 are trending downward, as seen in Figure 1. They are initially lower for Black residents than all other residents and are slightly lower for BEI programs than for the rest of the network. However, BEI programs have a smaller and shrinking gap between Black and non-Black residents in their assessment of preparation to teach, with a notable drop for all groups in 2022. By 2022, Black residents reported higher levels of preparation to teach than non-Black residents in BEI programs in contrast to non-BEI programs. We ran similar analyses for program graduates and principals and did not see notable differences in principal ratings of educator effectiveness for graduates of BEI versus non-BEI residencies, or between graduates' self-assessment of preparation to teach between BEI and non-BEI residencies.

Table 5
Graduates Hired Before and After BEI

	(1) *Graduates Hired in Title I Schools*	(2) *Graduates Hired in Partner Districts*
After BEI	13.56 (11.23)	23.61* (12.62)
Constant	35.11*** (7.46)	35.05*** (7.85)
Observations	34	31
R-squared	0.04	0.11

Standard errors in parentheses:
*** $p < .01$
** $p < .05$
* $p < .10$

On average, residents in the BEI program reported that their program coursework was relevant to their school context and classroom (difference of 0.16 on a scale of 1-4 between the original eight BEI and non-BEI residencies, *p*-value for two-tailed *t*-test=0.02), but were less likely to agree that their coursework featured a good balance of theoretical and practical considerations (difference of 0.14, *p*-value 0.04). There were no statistically significant differences on these measures between Black residents and residents of other races for BEI or non-BEI programs, as shown in Table 6.

BEI residents and graduates felt that their coursework was comprehensive, but clinical preparation really prepared them to teach because the "culture is different in every school" (Delilah, Resident). The length of the clinical experience increased residents' feeling of being prepared to teach, and in particular, being prepared to teach students of color. One resident said:

> I think I just feel so much more confident having that [clinical experience] for a year as opposed to like six weeks…and being like, 'Okay you're ready to teach.' And so, I definitely have felt supported in that I'm prepared and ready to go. (Payal, Resident)

Respondents expressed that there seemed to be a mismatch between coursework, which tends to be traditional, and residency cli-

Figure 1
Resident Assessment of Preparation to Teach for Black
Versus All Other Residents, BEI Versus Rest of Network, Over Time
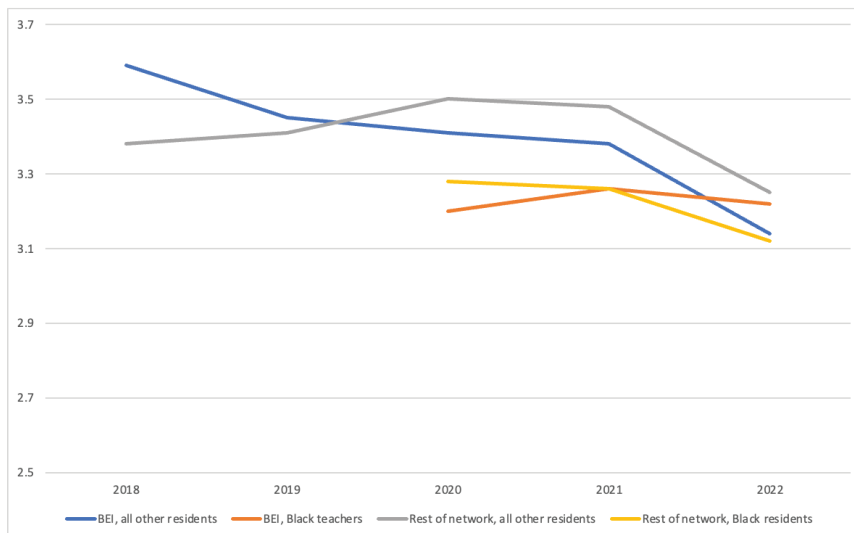
mates, which were more oriented toward social justice. Residents complete graduate-level coursework through a higher education institution, and BEI administrators noted that, often, this coursework had not changed despite a changing political climate. According to one administrator:

> Higher education from a predominantly White institute was not necessarily ready to do the work, or not necessarily ready to know how to respond to that. [We are in a position of] bringing it back to [the residency], being able to examine what the leadership looks like. Does it reflect those in the community and in the program? What does the curriculum look like and what is being shared with residents? Does that curriculum perpetuate some of the issues that the residents face? (Robert, BEI Administrator)

In the clinical setting, the classroom mentor plays a key instructional role for residents. In general, satisfaction with mentorship is higher among Black residents than their non-Black peers in the original eight BEI programs. As shown in Table 6, Black residents report higher average results than non-Black residents on whether their current or most recent classroom mentor provided them with feedback in a way that valued and affirmed their full identity (mean for Black residents=3.55 out of 4, mean for all other residents=3.52 out of 4), but this difference is not statistically significant.

Four of the eight BEI residencies worked closely with schools and districts to find effective teachers to serve as classroom mentors. While their goal was to match mentors to residents by race, given the racial

Table 6
Survey Results on Preparation, Black vs. Other Residents, BEI vs. Other Programs

	Overall		Original 8 BEI programs			All BEI programs			All other programs			T-test for Original BEI vs. non-BEI
	Black	All other races	Black	All other races	t-test for difference	Black	All other races	t-test for difference	Black all other races		t-test for difference	
Balance of theoretical and practical	3.31	3.42	3.36	3.31	0.398 (p=0.69)	3.31	3.37	0.90) (p=0.37	3.35	3.48	1.07 (p=0.29)	*-2.02 (p=0.04)*
Mentor values and affirms resident as an individual	3.44	3.51	3.55	3.52	0.328 (p=0.743)	3.42	3.50	1.01 (p=0.31)	3.50	3.54	0.27 (p=0.78)	-0.10 (p=0.92)
Coursework is relevant to practice	3.26	3.21	3.36	3.38	0.152 (p=0.88)	3.27	3.27	0.89 (p=0.37)	3.19	3.22	0.19 (p=0.85)	2.26 (p=0.02)

composition of the profession in the United States, most residents had classroom mentors with racial identities different from their own. In some cases, residents had a meaningful relationship with their mentor regardless of race. In others, residents noted how meaningful and empowering it was to have a Black classroom mentor. One Resident explained:

> I feel like it helped to see someone who looked like me in a sense, but also someone who was mentoring me. Like I could see myself as being a first-grade teacher and knowing like, okay someone else who is actually a good teacher, knows what she's doing, is organized, is able to advocate for the Black students in her classroom. So, I think it was very empowering. (Max, Resident)

Some BEI residencies were able to recruit more Black classroom mentors, seeing mentorship as a leadership pathway. One BEI administrator said:

> We have had historically White teachers as mentors. It should be a leadership development pathway for mentors. I would like us to be more adamant about making sure our mentors reflect our resident pool. (Matteo, BEI Administrator)

The Importance of Program and School Climate in Teacher Preparation

Black residents often face adversarial or unsupportive school environments leading to a high turnover rate for Black teachers (Amos, 2020; Campoli, 2017; Griffin & Tackie, 2016). In contrast, a positive school climate refers to an environment where a school's norms, values, and expectations create an environment where teachers and students feel socially, emotionally, and physically safe (Cohen et al., 2009). Although residents found that residency climates were affirming, they were frustrated by the school climates they experienced during clinical preparation.

The most consistent indicator of climate among BEI residency program participants, graduates, mentors, and administrators was the level of support and sense of community that the programs offered. For residency programs operating with a cohort model, community was frequently named as a positive factor for feeling supported. Residents also emphasized diversity among residency faculty and staff, supportive leadership, and centering issues of race and equity while maintaining safe and supportive environments for open discussion as key factors in residency climates, as highlighted in this quote:

> The only way that I've been able to show out as a Black teacher is just being a Black teacher and being honest about being a Black teacher

and being a Black woman teacher. So, that's not necessarily something that you can be taught; it's not in a textbook. But I do feel like the level of support I've had allows me to get to that mindset where I'm not going to hide being Black because I realize how important it is to my students to be Black. (Payal, Resident)

Overall, though, residents and graduates noted that they felt supported in the residency program but felt less so in the school environments that they experienced either during their residency clinical practice or when they were employed. While the residency curriculum emphasized cultural responsiveness, the school curricula and environment did not always reflect that climate, which led to residents feeling frustrated. A graduate reflected:

> When I walked into the school I was in complete culture shock because I had looked up the diversity of the student population and the student population was not indicative of the teachers. So, when I saw all White teachers I was like, "What did I just do!!?".... I don't even understand why this program would even put me here knowing that I'm the only…person of color in this building, I look like the help. And so, do the students see me as the help? (Alimatu, Graduate)

Residents noted that a lack of diversity in school leadership, either during their clinical practice or once they were employed, had similar consequences. In one incident, a White principal summoned a resident from his classroom because a White parent had a complaint. In the quote below, the resident explains how he did not feel that he had been treated fairly:

> And at the end of the day I feel like how people are treated comes from the head. So, if you're the head and you're not—you can't cover me, I feel like I'm in a loss of a situation if I came to you and another parent cussed me out that you would just have their back because you didn't listen to my side of the story (Cam, Resident)

Affinity groups provide a space for residents and alumni to reflect on and grapple with the often-hostile climates they faced in their schools during clinical practice or when fully employed:

> Providing that space where they can grapple with what is happening in their schools and doing that with their cohort members. An alumni told me that they would not have survived without that space. (Linda, BEI Administrator)

However, affinity groups must be designed well, with enough Black educators to support them and careful integration into residents' already busy schedules.

Discussion and Implications

The BEI initiative is too recent to have substantial evidence on long-term impacts, such as graduate self-efficacy, teacher retention beyond one year, and impact on student learning. Yet, in this preliminary analysis, we identified some promising strategies and practices that residency programs use to recruit and retain Black educators, as well as avenues for further study, particularly where we had insufficient data or where participants highlighted areas for growth, to propose a research agenda for ongoing analysis of the role of residencies in cultivating a diverse teacher workforce.

Implications for Practice

Quantitative analyses provide preliminary evidence of the potential teacher residencies have for supporting Black educators, and qualitative analyses provide preliminary evidence for specific strategies to support recruitment of Black educators.

The qualitative analysis suggests BEI residencies that deliver high-quality support, care for not only their residents but also historically marginalized communities, and create safe and supportive environments successfully recruited and retained Black educators. Specific strategies used by these residencies may be valuable in other communities that are currently underrepresented by the teaching profession. For instance, strategic partnerships between residencies, and even traditional schools of education, local schools and districts to identify and support potential educators may help increase the overall diversity of the profession and locate promising educators for hard to fill positions like dual-language.

BEI residencies focus on anti-racist or social justice not only provides a welcoming space for residents but also prepares these educators to create supportive and culturally responsive classrooms in the school sites where residents are employed and, potentially, as a teacher of record.

The qualitative evidence also reveals an opportunity for all residencies to increase diversity among mentors. Residents noted the importance of mentors, especially those that provide culturally responsive support and who are the same race. Recruiting Black residency graduates is likely a productive strategy for ensuring that more residents learn from mentors with expertise in culturally responsive education and that Black residents have the opportunity to learn from teachers who look like them.

Although the number of Black students is increasing, the proportion of Black teachers joining the profession is lower (Ingersoll, 2021).

In addition, Black teachers leave that profession at higher rates than do teachers from other racial groups (Campoli, 2017) because they feel underprepared, undervalued, or experience hostile or unsupportive work environments (Amos, 2020; Campoli, 2017; Griffin & Tackie, 2016). Residencies should consider how they might expand their scope of practice to cultivate supportive environments for the success of Black teachers beyond the residency year experience. One possible way to do this is to focus increasing support around partnering and designing for equity with communities and schools. In addition to these suggestions, an important step would be gathering additional insights from residencies, their partner schools and importantly, from the communities that residents will serve.

Avenues for Further Exploration

Several practices emerged from this study that either came as suggestions from residents or residency staff or were explored by a small number of residencies in the network and could be tested in larger pilots. Three of the administrators we interviewed stressed the importance of considering the intersectional identities of Black educators, so that programs create support and space for these. For example, gender differences or learning disabilities might indicate the need for different types of support. Similarly, one administrator discussed the importance of being more inclusive of intersectional identities of teachers in recruitment and programming efforts.

Study participants noted that the stipends were not a "living wage" and did not even enable them to pay for rent. Program administrators told us that emergency funding was a crucial supplement to this stipend and had made the difference between a resident staying in the program or leaving. Residencies might consider providing financial support to residents from the start of summer programming through their last summer before beginning teaching full-time in the fall. One way of supporting residents during summer programming could be to recruit and pay them as mentors for the incoming cohort of residents.

Residents and graduates highlighted the importance of hearing from Black educators, including alumni, mentors, and residency staff, during the recruitment process. Residencies might explore different ways of including Black perspectives during the recruitment cycle, including hiring Black recruiters, organizing alumni panels, and requesting Black educators within their networks to speak about their experiences as teachers. This could also be a strategy for bringing together Black graduates and mentors to share resources on leadership

pathways and career development. Lastly, residencies that do not do so already, might consider building partnerships with HBCUs as one strategy for recruiting Black educators.

Unsurprisingly, there is a disconnect between the environment created by residencies and the school climates encountered by residents. While affinity groups create a safe space for shared experiences they might also be used more intentionally to advocate for change. The Black Teacher Project for example, used the liberatory consciousness framework to create different types of racial affinity professional development, focused on supporting teachers to recognize and challenge structural inequities (Mosley, 2018).Teacher residencies might consider investing and supporting research and pilots of different types of affinity groups.

We also found a disconnect between the traditional coursework offered through traditional higher education institutions and the culturally responsive approach taken by residency staff. Building on existing efforts, residencies can consider building continuous improvement-oriented communities of practice, perhaps alongside partners such as institutions of higher education and clinical practice schools, to develop and share promising practices in culturally responsive and critical pedagogy. Residencies can also strengthen their professional relationships with school leadership, including teacher leaders. That way, when residents face difficult situations in their schools, residency staff could work directly with mentors, peers, principals, or others to address the challenges.

As the number of Black graduates increases, residencies could be more intentional about supporting career pathways for these graduates. For example, as they graduate more residents, they might work with school leadership to prioritize appointing them as mentors. Affinity groups can provide a space for Black residents to share their experiences and to explore avenues for bringing about change in the school systems. Residencies that do have this social justice approach might consider articulating all the ways in which their programming and support reflected this approach. Other residencies might consider supporting the formation of affinity groups.

A Research Agenda for Teacher Residencies: Potential, Precision, Power

This exploratory study of the BEI rollout at eight pilot sites has uncovered several areas for further research and evaluation. As the program grows, long-term outcomes will be defined and data sources will become more readily available; more data will be collected; and

larger samples will enable more robust statistical analyses. Not all residencies in NCTR's network have collected or reported hiring data by race or ethnicity. Similarly, not all residencies collect disaggregated data on applications to the program, making it difficult to assess what proportion of potential Black applicants completed the application-through-hiring cycle. Raising awareness and providing support for this data collection could inform what we know about promising strategies for the recruitment and retention of Black educators.

As the BEI program expands, monitoring long-term outcomes, like teacher retention beyond the first year and teacher impact on student outcomes, will be critical for ongoing program evaluation and development efforts. The BEI program design also presents an opportunity to examine the effects of the BEI intervention (e.g., in a difference-in-differences framework) because programs that adopted BEI later could serve as a natural comparison group for those that had adopted it earlier. Adding participating residents and residency programs as the initiative grows would also increase sample size, statistical power, and precision of estimated effects. A complete cost-benefit analysis would also give administrators, NCTR, policymakers, and other stakeholders insights into which strategies and budgetary allocations are providing the greatest return on their investments. Given the resource-intensive nature of the program, variability in program strategies, and expressed need for additional resources, decision makers need data to understand better how they can make the most effective uses of scarce resources relative to cost.

Finally, the mixed-methods study has generated several hypotheses that could be further studied using complementary methods. For instance, the preliminary quantitative evaluation indicates success of the BEI approach overall with regard to recruitment and retention. A deeper dive with case studies focused on the specific strategies related to recruitment and retention based on the context of each residency could yield further insights. Similarly, the qualitative analysis has revealed several promising strategies that interviewees found worthwhile, including high-touch, responsive recruitment practices, support for mentors and the centering of race and identity into the coursework and support provided by the residency program. Further quantitative research could determine the prevalence and effectiveness of these strategies.

Conclusion

During the school year 2022-23, teacher turnover reached its highest point in five years, about two percentage points greater than pre-

COVID rates, especially in high-poverty schools (Barnum, 2023). This teacher turnover disproportionately affects Black students (National School Boards Association, 2020). There is therefore not just growing research consensus but also a critical urgency in recruiting and retaining more effective Black educators as an important element of increasing both equity and effectiveness of schools. Teacher residencies present a promising approach to teacher preparation and retention that addresses many challenges and limitations that have been identified in traditional teacher preparation programs. Studying the BEI provides an opportunity to investigate the link between these two strands of research and promising education reform strategies—how can residencies be purposefully and strategically designed and implemented to specifically address the barriers to recruitment and retention of Black educators and cultivate a supportive and affirming environment for strong teacher preparation? Our preliminary evaluation has revealed both promising early evidence for the overall approach and specific strategies, as well as a number of areas for further study as the field seeks to strengthen teacher preparation to alleviate educational inequity.

However, system-level changes are likely needed to scale residencies. First, state agencies and districts play a crucial role in helping to spur the creation and expansion of residencies through partnerships with universities and other education preparation providers, like the residencies featured in our study. State and district actors have the resources to form these types of partnerships. Our study and others referenced in this article offer proof points that residencies are valuable.

Second, the federal government and philanthropies are poised to expand residencies by helping fund the stipends and other forms of financial support offered by residencies. The federal government has an additional lever by offering loan forgiveness to residents who teach in schools similar to their residency placements or teach for a specified length of time.

Third, in the current political climate, anti-racism and social justice are hot button topics. However, as we have discussed, residencies with this lens were attractive to some Black residents. We are encouraged by the continued commitment of BEI residencies and, more broadly, teachers and school leaders from across the country to create classrooms and school systems that provide high-quality instruction to all students, responding to both their academic and social-emotional strengths and needs. The local approach advanced by BEI residencies may offer opportunities for families and other community members to learn about the importance of anti-racism and social justice and how it benefits all students—not just those historically marginalized by

our school systems. Residencies could invite a wider segment of the community to learn about their approach. Conversations between residents and families offer daily opportunities to learn about what anti-racist and social justice-oriented education looks like. Ultimately, the positive impact these programs and their graduates have on the community should help generate more support of such programming.

Acknowledgements

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