

Building a High-Quality Rural Teacher Pipeline Through a Partnership-Based Residency and Induction Model

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One of the most pressing issues facing rural school districts is the shortage of teachers, tied in part to higher levels of turnover as compared to urban and suburban districts (Ingersoll & Tran, 2023). A key strategy for addressing nationwide teacher workforce needs, including rural teacher workforce needs, is teacher residencies. This article presents the case of a sustainably funded residency program co-designed as part of a partnership between a university-based teacher preparation program based at the University of Texas at El Paso and a rural school district, Fabens ISD. The university is a large, public Hispanic-serving institution with a student population that is more than 80% Hispanic/Latinx, more than 70% Pell-eligible, and approximately 50% first-generation college-going. The rural school district partner comprises nearly 2,000 PK-12 students, more than 95% Hispanic/Latinx and 92% economically disadvantaged. In the paper, we present the key design features of this residency model, with a particular focus on asset-based recruitment strategies, faculty coaching support in the district, and district-based innovations aimed at sustaining paid pathways for residents across undergraduate and graduate levels. We also situate our partnership-based residency and induction efforts within larger region-wide collective impact efforts focused on strengthening and diversifying the teacher pipeline. Finally, we present emerging findings on the impact of residency on teacher candidates and the district employment outlook. This multivocal piece represents a burgeoning research-practice partnership (Coburn & Penuel, 2016), and we, as co-authors, present our findings from the perspectives of the university preparation program, on-the-ground faculty support, and school district leadership.

Keywords: rural teacher pipeline, Hispanic, residency, partnership, innovative staffing

One of the most pressing issues facing rural school districts is the shortage of teachers, tied in part to higher levels of turnover as compared to urban and suburban districts (Ingersoll & Tran, 2023). The driving forces behind rural teacher shortages

include geographical isolation, resource constraints, and workload pressures tied to the small size of districts (Oyen & Schweinle, 2020; Tran & Smith, 2019). It is widely acknowledged that the staffing challenges resulting from persistent teacher shortages can negatively impact the educational outcomes of K-12 students (Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll & Tran, 2023; Ronfeldt et al., 2013), and these negative impacts are compounded in areas characterized by high numbers of economically marginalized students of color (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; García & Weiss, 2019; Ronfeldt et al., 2013).

One strategy for addressing nationwide teacher workforce needs is teacher residencies. Often co-designed between teacher preparation programs and school districts, teacher residencies involve candidates being immersed for an entire year in the classroom alongside a carefully selected and trained mentor teacher, with intensive coaching and support from the program provider as well as integrated pre-service coursework (Guha et al., 2016). The close partnership between the preparation program and the school district is a key defining feature of residencies. While teacher residencies initially started in the alternative certification space more than two decades ago, they have gained prominence across all levels, including undergraduate teacher education, in recent years. Residencies, according to the Pathways Alliance (2022), can include undergraduate, graduate, or certificate-only level routes and are “locally designed to meet the needs of the schools and communities they serve, including in rural, urban, and suburban areas” (p. 1).

While there is a growing research base documenting the impacts of teacher residencies in urban areas, less is known about partnership-based residencies in rural areas. This article, in conjunction with the other articles that comprise this special issue, seeks to address this gap by highlighting a residency partnership between a university-based teacher preparation program and a rural school district located 25 miles outside the urban area where the university is based. The university – a public, research-intensive Hispanic Serving Institution located in far west Texas on the US-Mexico border – includes a student population that is more than 80% Hispanic/Latinx, more than 70% Pell-eligible, and approximately 50% first-generation college-going. The residency

partner, which has been designated a rural district by the state education agency, is made up of nearly 2,000 PK-12 students, more than 95% of whom are Hispanic/Latinx and 92% of whom are categorized as economically disadvantaged. The unincorporated town where the district is based, which is in a predominantly agricultural area, includes a population of just over 5,000 inhabitants with a per capita income of \$17,747 – half the per capita income of the state of Texas (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022), with a town poverty rate of 48.8% (Stebbins & Sauter, 2018). In this way, the site contains some common aspects of rurality in the U.S., including a relatively close distance from an urban center, a small population, and an agriculturally based economy. The site is also unique in its proximity to the US-Mexico border and its very high poverty rate.

In this paper, we present the key design features of this residency model, with a particular focus on asset-based recruitment strategies, coaching support in the district, and district-based innovations aimed at sustaining paid pathways for residents across undergraduate and graduate levels. We also situate our partnership-based residency and induction efforts within larger region-wide collective impact efforts focused on strengthening and diversifying the teacher pipeline. Finally, we present emerging findings on the impact of residency on teacher candidates and the district employment outlook. This multivocal piece represents a burgeoning residency-focused research-practice partnership (Coburn & Penuel, 2016), and we, as co-authors, outline our findings from the perspectives of the university preparation program, on-the-ground faculty support, and school district leadership.

Strengthening the Rural Teacher Pipeline through Access to High-Quality, Paid Residencies

Given the presence of teacher residencies for over two decades – particularly in urban settings (Berry et al., 2008; Zeichner & Bier, 2012) – and their proliferation over the last decade, a consensus has emerged on the key elements that comprise high-quality residency models. These elements include strong university-district partnerships, coursework integrated with clinical practice, selection of master mentor teachers who co-teach with residents for an entire year, and placements of resident cohorts in schools selected for their modeling of effective practices with diverse learners (Guha et al., 2016).

It has been shown that intentionally designed teacher residencies lead to greater racial/ethnic diversity in the teacher workforce and increased retention rates among residency-prepared new teachers in high-needs schools (Silva et al., 2014; Silva et al., 2015; Carver-Thomas, 2018).

While year-long, clinically intensive teacher residencies have emerged as one key mechanism to address issues of recruitment, retention, and workforce diversity (Guha et al., 2017; Carver-Thomas, 2018), these high-quality pathways can remain out of reach for teacher candidates, particularly those from low-income and first-generation backgrounds. For many candidates, the economic hardship caused by foregoing income for an extended period represents a significant barrier to entering a high-quality residency pathway. In this way, *access* and *affordability* have become front and center of the residency debate (Dennis et al., 2021; Yun & DeMoss, 2020). These issues are particularly relevant to teacher preparation programs that seek to serve – at scale – predominantly undergraduate students from minoritized backgrounds.

Teacher preparation programs have made headway on questions of access and affordability by co-designing with district partners sustainably funded paid residency pathways for candidates. Much of the research and policy literature on sustainable residencies identify three mechanisms of funding, known as the “3 Rs”: reallocation, reduction, and reinvestment (Bland et al., 2023; Dennis & DeMoss, 2021; Yun & DeMoss, 2020). In Texas, where this partnership is based, the state education agency channeled federal pandemic funding into supporting paid teacher residencies by providing a three-year runway for districts to identify sustainable funding sources based on these tenets. With support from a national teacher preparation technical assistance provider, US PREP, and local educational service centers, school districts across the state worked to pinpoint critical staffing roles that residents could take on as part of their paid residency, thereby serving to relieve staffing burdens on campuses while also receiving often much-needed financial assistance to complete the residency. This approach, known as “strategic staffing,” included compensated roles such as substitute teaching, tutoring, vacancy pair teaching, and paraprofessionals (US PREP, 2024).

This article presents the case of a sustainably funded residency program co-designed as part of a partnership between a university-based teacher preparation program based at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) and a rural school district, Fabens ISD (FISD). Narrated from the vantage points of university-based program leadership (author #1), on-the-ground clinical faculty Site Coordinator (author #2), and district leadership (author #3), the article provides background on the district and partnership. Specifically, it outlines the targeted recruitment strategies employed to attract University teacher candidates, who are predominantly Hispanic, to the district, as well as the on-the-ground efforts to provide ongoing coaching and support to teacher candidates and new teachers. We also highlight the innovative staffing models utilized by the district to fund undergraduate and graduate residents sustainably. The article wraps up by situating this university-district partnership within larger, cross-sector efforts to strengthen the teacher pipeline across rural, suburban, and urban areas across the El Paso region of far west Texas.

Program Overview: UTEP-Fabens Partnership

The rural partnership-based residency at the center of this article is part of the fully scaled, year-long Miner Teacher Residency program at UTEP. The program's overarching goal is to prepare the highest-quality teachers who are day-one ready to meet the needs of diverse students and provide rigorous, high-quality learning experiences to all students. Since its launch in 2019, the Miner Teacher Residency has prepared more than 400 teachers, with an average of 125-150 teacher graduates per year during the last three years. With funding from the Teacher Quality Partnership program at the U.S. Department of Education and local philanthropic support, the university also provides induction support to first- and second-year teachers who are resident graduates.

The residency program is a requirement for all undergraduate education majors (elementary, elementary bilingual, middle grades, and special education certification areas) and an option for post-baccalaureate alternative certification-seeking candidates. It is (so far) a paid experience for all teacher candidates at all levels. Residents spend four days/week co-teaching alongside a master mentor teacher who is carefully selected by the partnership and participates in more than 15 hours of professional development

from the university throughout the residency year. In addition, residents participate in a weekly seminar with their Site Coordinator, a university clinical faculty member who conducts 7-8 walkthroughs and four individualized observation cycles throughout the residency year. In addition to the coaching and support provided to residents by their mentor teacher and Site Coordinator, the Miner Teacher Residency model includes quarterly shared governance meetings with district partners, where university and district/campus leaders share data and make joint decisions about the program. In this section, we provide background on the LEA partner from the perspective of district leadership and describe the origins of the partnership from the perspective of the district-based university Site Coordinator.

Background on Fabens ISD

Fabens ISD is located along the southern US-Mexico border in a community that is one of the poorest in the state. The district meets the criteria set by the state agency for classification as a rural district. It is also an unincorporated town, reliant on the county for services. FISD is the largest employer and only source for libraries and local government in the form of an elected school board. The area's low incomes are reflected in its property values. The typical home in the community is worth just \$61,600, less than half the median home value in the state (\$142,700) and about a third of the national median home value of \$184,700. Low property values mean the district collects less funding from those valuations. According to the state education agency, the district collects less than \$3 million in property taxes, which accounts for only 10 percent of all district expenditures. Also, our cash reserves in the district are depleted, so we have to be extremely intentional in how we spend our financial resources.

Additionally, over 92% of our students are identified as economically disadvantaged, and 48% are identified as emergent bilingual. Due to poverty issues and a lack of community centers and opportunities for enrichment, many of our students do not engage in the same stimulating activities that their more financially stable peers engage in. Furthermore, due to close proximity to the border, we have students with dual citizenship who are separated from their nuclear family for weeks while in school, face

challenges in their English-speaking and academic skills, and lack similar background knowledge as their peers.

Despite these obstacles, FISD does not make excuses for our students. Instead, the district works to fill the void, build their schemas, and form their crystallized intelligence. The students may be poor in income but rich in potential and heart. The 2019 state accountability rating was 88 out of 100, and the district competes with and often outperforms other schools across the state with similar demographics. None of the campuses were identified as Requiring Improvement or Targeted Support, based on 2019 Federal Accountability metrics. The summative measure of success is the Career, College, and Military Readiness (CCMR) outcomes. In this measure, the Fabens ISD rate exceeds the regional and state rate by 20%.

With just under 2,000 students, FISD provides robust academic programs and college and career readiness programs, including an Early College High School, STEM Engineering pathway, and P-TECH (Pathways in Technology Early College High School) and Early College school within a school. The need for dual credit credentialed teachers was met with a “District of Innovation” designation from the state agency. This designation allowed the district to hire non-state-certified teachers for hard-to-fill positions. While this helped combat the teacher shortage, this plan could not be used for Special Education and Bilingual teachers, two certification areas in great need. The teacher turnover rate post-COVID has risen to 24%. “Grow your Own ” initiatives in FISD were crucial to meeting the district's staffing needs and providing equitable access to quality instruction for all students. Returning from the pandemic, FISD experienced an even more severe teacher shortage. Vacancies in Special Education and Bilingual Education received no applicants. Recruiting from alternative certification programs, Bilingual exception waivers, and increased caseloads for its current SPED teachers, in addition to the expanded role of paraprofessionals, provided some short-term solutions. A nascent but growing partnership with the local university paved the way for longer-term solutions.

Origins of the UTEP-Fabens Partnership

Teaching can be an isolated experience, especially for new teachers. This became even more evident as novice teachers started the 2020-2021 school year in what soon became a new way of teaching and interacting through a virtual platform. In August 2020, amid a global pandemic, the common image of students filling up hallways on the first day of school seemed to be a thing of the past. Instead, new teachers started their careers in a less-than-ideal setting for any educator, more so for a novice teacher. Meeting their students for the first time through a computer screen and having their home spaces transformed into "classrooms" became the new norm. For new teachers, the challenges multiplied as they tried to manage remote teaching, navigate a new curriculum, and use new educational platforms. Despite facing challenges beyond what had been experienced by any educational organization, FISD prioritized its mission to create a support system to ensure their novice teachers' retention and consequently impact student learning.

For FISD, the teacher shortage was a challenge even before the pandemic, which led the district to find innovative ways to recruit and retain highly qualified educators. As part of their efforts to counteract the already prevalent teacher shortage, and with support from the local community foundation, FISD partnered with UTEP to provide instructional coaching initiatives that supported new teachers and their classroom mentors. Through this partnership, the Miner Teacher Mentorship Program was born in 2020 to provide meaningful support systems for new teachers and cultivate an optimal learning environment for their students in this small rural community, who predominantly lack the same opportunities and resources as their urban counterparts. As part of this model, a university induction Site Coordinator (author #2) worked alongside district leaders to build capacity in new teacher mentors and to help build infrastructure to support new teachers. While early program efforts focused on mentoring support for all new teachers in the district, more recent grant-funded efforts focus on providing two years of aligned induction support to resident graduates employed by the district.

Key Elements of Co-Designed Paid Residency

Anchored in early partnership efforts focused on new teacher mentorship, the UTEP-Fabens collaboration expanded in 2022 with the opportunity to access state

funding to support paid residencies. One stipulation of the state-level grant was that the district and Educator Preparation Program would develop a plan to support the residency once state funding ended – efforts that the university had already engaged in with other district partners as part of our paid residency pilot. With the foundation of partnership in place through the mentorship program, university program leadership worked closely with district leadership to design the year-long residency starting in early 2022, with planned implementation for fall 2022. From February to June, we met monthly to discuss key design aspects, including district workforce needs, resident recruitment, mentor teacher selection, and parameters for compensated resident roles.

The signature elements of the UTEP-Fabens residency were part of the university's teacher residency model, which was initially based on technical assistance from US PREP and was incrementally scaled after the initial pilot in 2019-2020. These elements included: immersion of teacher candidates in classrooms co-teaching alongside master mentor teachers four days/week for an entire year; careful selection and training of mentor teachers; coaching of teacher candidates by a university field-based clinical faculty Site Coordinator, who conducts 7-8 walkthroughs and four formal observations with video-based coaching throughout the year; a weekly residency seminar; and shared governance between the university and school district, where program data are reviewed together and decisions about residency and teacher preparation are made jointly.

In 2022-2023, the residency included the placement of seven elementary, elementary bilingual, and special education candidates in FISSD, while in 2023-2024, there were five candidates representing the same certification areas. All candidates across both years were female and Hispanic/Latina. Residents were paid a \$20,000 stipend based on grant funding allocations from the state, while mentor teachers – many of whom were recognized as high-performing teachers under the state's incentive program – earned a \$2,500 stipend from the same funding source. For 2024-2025, the district engaged in internal budgetary re-allocations and assumed budgetary responsibility for eight residents and mentor teachers using a strategic staffing approach; the district provided resident stipends in the amount of \$14,000 – which was aligned with neighboring districts and was decided as part of a region-wide governance structure.

While the UTEP-Fabens residency partnership included the key elements that characterize the university's residency model at scale with districts across the region, the partnership also included some distinctive features that reflected the uniqueness of this rural context. One was the intentional focus on recruitment of teacher candidates to the district; another was the Site Coordinator role and relationships built over time in the district; and the third was the innovative staffing model implemented by the district in order to be able to provide stipends to residents.

Intentional Recruitment of Teacher Candidates for Rural Placement

One key struggle faced by FISD before the launch of the year-long residency was recruiting teacher candidates who sought to be placed in the district for their semester-long student teaching experience. Without these placements, the district relied heavily on alternative certification candidates to fill teacher vacancies. Through the university-district shared governance structure and within a larger, region-wide Teacher Pipeline Community of Practice, the need became apparent for intentional recruitment efforts focused on the unique strengths of FISD as a rural district to build a district-specific rural teacher pipeline.

The basis for these recruitment efforts was the co-designed Miner Teacher Residency model, where teacher candidates would have access to high-quality preparation in the district. Given the already-established Miner Teacher Mentorship Program, residents hired in the district would also have access to two years of induction support following the residency. With these program pathways in place, we set out to recruit university teacher candidates to select FISD as their preferred residency placement district.

From the university side, one key strategy was the implementation of a District Information Fair for prospective residents. The idea for the District Information Fair originated in part from program leadership looking at data on the districts selected by teacher candidates for their student teaching and residency placements; we found that students tended to select based on geography and legacy, and these criteria favored the three large urban districts surrounding the university. We also heard from our rural district

partners about their challenges with promotion and their desire to spotlight their strengths with incoming teacher candidates.

To provide voice and space for rural districts in the candidates' preference selection process, we implemented the District Information Fair, where each school district had equal access to candidates in one setting and could share information on a one-on-one and small-group basis with candidates. The event, which takes place on the university campus prior to the deadline for teacher candidates to submit their residency application, provides prospective residents with the opportunity to meet with representatives from each of the university's seven district partners in the region to learn more about the residency and new teacher experience in each district. Representatives from rural districts such as Fisd can share the benefits of working in a rural district, including (but not limited to) the small size, close-knit community, and high levels of support for teachers.

Another important strategy implemented by UTEP and Fisd, with support from philanthropic partners and the state education agency, was the recruitment of current paraprofessionals in the district to complete certification with UTEP. This "Grow Your Own" (GYO) approach mirrored that of other districts and teacher preparation programs across the country (see Gist et al., 2019). In order to attract GYO candidates, UTEP staff worked with Fisd to conduct campus-based and virtual information sessions to provide information about teacher preparation program pathways. Philanthropic partners, including the Brown Foundation and the El Paso Community Foundation, also provided tuition support for Fisd paraprofessionals to complete coursework for certification.

The final key strategy for teacher candidate recruitment was the culture built around the residency in Fisd. From the outset, teacher residents were treated like teachers on their respective campuses and were warmly welcomed into the community. The district supported residents at every level, from matching them with top teachers to providing technology support and access to materials from the beginning of the residency. The culture of support constructed around the residency from district leadership to campus leadership to classrooms was a highly effective recruitment strategy, as word

started to spread among teacher candidates about the value and benefits of being placed in FISD.

Between years one and three of residency recruitment, the number of university teacher candidates who selected Fabens as their top preferred district more than doubled. At the start of the residency partnership (fall 2022), three teacher candidates selected FISD as their preferred district, with three more selecting it for the spring 2023 start. In our third year of the partnership (fall 2024), eight teacher candidates chose FISD as their preferred district.

University Site Coordinator Based in the District

In the university's preparation program, the clinical faculty Site Coordinators (SC) play a crucial role that is fundamental to the program's success. They serve as key players in coordinating the collaboration, communication, and coordination of collaborative spaces between community partners, students, college of education faculty, and district and campus administrators. Additionally, the Site Coordinator provides residents with a differentiated coaching and mentorship approach to support and guide them through their educational pathway. Grounding their practices in ongoing data collection/analysis, Site Coordinators continuously refine their coaching to enhance student outcomes and ensure they meet their residents' needs. Moreover, in recognition of our region's diversity, Site Coordinators advocate for practices that promote equity and inclusion of all students.

The role of the Site Coordinator in Fabens ISD is not just unique; it is transformative. As part of its mission to prepare and retain educators, the district has embraced the university educational pipeline, welcoming teacher candidates to complete a year-long residency under the guidance of exceptional mentor teachers at their different campuses. This approach provides a multilevel system of support for aspiring teachers who choose FISD as the place to complete their residency. The transformative aspect lies in the opportunity for the same Site Coordinator to accompany the teacher candidate through their residency and induction programs. Solid relationships have been cultivated between the Site Coordinator, teacher residents, and teacher mentors, leading to positive outcomes. The impact of such relationships is evident when teacher residents seek the

Site Coordinator's feedback, coaching, and advice beyond the required program observations, a clear sign of their confidence and trust in the program and the Site Coordinator.

Site Coordinators not only support residents in developing reflective practice and creating specific goals driven by their self-assessment but also play a crucial role in creating a supportive environment. They lead a weekly seminar reinforcing interactions and fostering a safe space where residents can freely express themselves. It is through these meaningful interactions that special bonds are formed, enhancing the overall learning experience. Furthermore, the Site Coordinator has gained access to all campuses and has established rapport with district and campus personnel, facilitating formal and informal communication, including data sharing, progress made between observation cycles, and discussing campus needs, as well as highlighting milestones achieved in the residents' educational journey.

In essence, the Site Coordinators' commitment and guidance greatly contribute to the pathway's success; more importantly, they support the creation of transformative educational spaces that empower and leave an enduring impact on the students being served through the partnership.

Innovative Staffing Model to Meet District Needs

In 2022, grant funding for teacher residencies, with support from the state education agency and the university, allowed Fabens expert teachers to mentor student residents from the university for a year-long paid residency. The Miner Teacher Residency replaced traditional student teaching by providing student teachers with a full year of paid teaching experience instead of a traditional one-semester student teaching experience. The residency brought well-prepared university students to the district, where they would train to fill future vacancies.

While taking advantage of this funding, Fisd also selected a sustainable funding model to fund the program past the grant period through the Vacancy Pair Teaching and Paraprofessional Vacancy models (US PREP, 2024). Mentors participate in co-teaching training provided by the university and work with teacher candidates through an array of co-teaching models that support residents as they progress toward independence in their

teaching. With this residency model, prospective teachers receive practical, hands-on classroom experience, preparing them for a more successful launch to their career as educators at FISD.

At FISD, teacher leaders serve as mentors to grow teachers and build support systems to ensure all students receive quality instruction while supporting teacher retention. Starting with a year-long residency, UTEP-prepared teachers in Fabens receive an additional two years of induction support, followed by opportunities to serve as mentors themselves and earn additional pay through the state's Teacher Incentive Allotment program. All of these opportunities - designed to honor effective, experienced teachers - provide a pathway that both attracts and keeps quality teachers in the district's classrooms.

Applying for grants and building partnerships has allowed FISD to combine resources for maximum impact to meet short-term and long-term teacher vacancies and better equip those teachers for sustained, successful, and rewarding careers serving the students who need highly qualified and dedicated teachers most.

Early Indications of Impact

The first two cohorts of resident graduates from FISD self-reported high levels of preparedness in different domains of teaching on the university's exit survey, taken at the time of graduation just weeks before the end of the residency. Of the five residents who completed the survey, 100% reported feeling well-prepared or very well-prepared in planning, instruction, learning environment, and professionalism. The same percentage reported feeling supported by their mentor teacher. When asked open-ended questions about what was most valuable about their residency experience, one highlighted that her mentor teacher was "incredible." Another identified "support" as being most valuable. A third resident mentioned "being able to see the real day to day of a teacher" as their highlight, while a fourth resident – a Grow Your Own candidate - spotlighted "getting to learn from a mentor teacher that I had the privilege of seeing as a little girl."

After successfully pairing residents with highly effective mentor teachers, FISD offered jobs to all residents after year one. All but one stayed with the district and filled critical vacancies the following school year as a new round of residents was welcomed

aboard. One resident who became certified in Special Education spent her residency paired with a master teacher who was given the caseload of two teachers due to the teacher shortage. The resident was able to work and learn alongside her mentor while serving the students through the co-teaching models, reducing the teacher-student ratio, and then filled that same vacancy the following year, where she now works with her former mentor as her colleague.

The mid-year influx of additional residents in spring 2023 was strategically placed in classrooms surpassing the class size limits allowed by the state. Hired the following year, FISD was able to fill all vacancies and reduce class sizes, ultimately impacting student outcomes. Going into staffing projections for the upcoming school year, FISD is projected to have a surplus of qualified applicants and will phase out the need for waivers in the elementary grades. As districts work to find sustainable funding for the residency program, FISD was visited by the state education agency to film, interview, and highlight the staffing model that will allow FISD to continue to train the next generation of teachers and ensure its students are well prepared to succeed after graduation.

The early indications of residency impact evident in FISD are part of a larger collective impact effort (Kania & Kramer, 2011) focused on strengthening the teacher pipeline across the greater El Paso region. One mechanism for this collective impact is through the El Paso Educator Pipeline Community of Practice (CoP) established in early 2019 by the local community foundation as a cross-sector partnership among philanthropy, the university educator preparation program, local school district leaders, the local community college, educational service center, and technical assistance partners. Convened by the El Paso Community Foundation, the Educator Pipeline CoP meets every quarter to plan and share data related to key initiatives aimed at positively impacting the teacher pipeline and, ultimately, PK-12 student outcomes across the region. The Miner Teacher Residency and Mentorship Program launch was a key initiative supported by the CoP, with early support provided by the Brown Foundation and later the Teacher Quality Partnership and Hawkins programs at the U.S. Department of Education.

Discussion and Practice-Based Recommendations for Rural Residencies

This article describes a residency partnership developed between a large, public Hispanic-serving institution and a rural school district located on the U.S.-Mexico border. The residency model co-designed between the university-based teacher preparation program and rural district includes several components associated with high-quality residency pathways (Guha et al., 2016), including candidates' spending an entire year co-teaching alongside a carefully selected and trained mentor teacher; coaching from a University Site Coordinator based in the district; integrated coursework; and two years of aligned induction support provided by the same University Site Coordinator. Embedded in the model is funding for resident "strategic staffing" stipends (undergraduate and graduate), which initially came from a state grant but have transitioned to being district-supported based on their internal reallocation strategies (Dennis & DeMoss, 2021). Early indicators point to the model's success in fostering a strong sense of preparedness among graduates and addressing acute teacher vacancy needs in the district.

As teacher residencies – particularly residencies in rural school districts – continue to expand across the country, this case points to the critical importance of partnership in co-designing and co-implementation of successful, mutually beneficial residency models. The emphasis here is on building a "transformational" rather than a "transactional" partnership (Butcher et al., 2011, p. 31) – one based on a shared sense of mission, open communication, and effective management of challenges as they arise. The structures and practices of transformational partnerships help pave the way for preparation programs and school districts to build a foundation of trust to navigate the everyday implementation of the residency and challenging decisions and difficulties as they arise. This mutual responsiveness embedded into partnership structures and practices allows for a tailored approach to addressing the specific needs that arise in a rural district, such as those related to the recruitment and retention of teacher candidates. This article highlights how teacher preparation for rural communities should not take place in a silo but rather should be "joint work" (Feimen-Nemser, 1998, p. 67) to ensure the highest level of preparation for the next generation of teachers. Raising teachers' preparation level at scale, in turn, positively impacts PK-12 students, particularly students from marginalized

communities who may have uneven access to high-quality teachers throughout their PK-12 career.

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About the Authors

Erika Mein, Ph.D., serves as Associate Dean of Academic Affairs in the College of Education at the University of Texas at El Paso and Professor in the Department of Teacher Education. As Associate Dean since 2019, she has helped spearhead transformation in UTEP’s teacher preparation program, focusing on providing the highest-quality preparation to predominantly Latinx teachers in and for the El Paso region. One key innovation was the co-design, implementation, and scaling of UTEP’s year-long paid teaching residency, called the Miner Teacher Residency, in close partnership with seven regional high-needs school districts. She also led the re-design of UTEP’s post-baccalaureate teacher certification program to include a year-long residency apprenticeship tied to an accelerated master’s degree pathway. These transformation efforts are part of a larger region-wide collective impact effort to strengthen and diversify the teacher pipeline to enhance the PK-16+ educational opportunities and outcomes for all students.

Michele Gonzalez is currently the Teacher Incentive Allotment Partnerships and Supports Manager at the Texas Education Agency. Most recently, Michele was the Assistant Superintendent at Fabens ISD in Region 19 El Paso, with over 30 years of education and executive leadership experience. As a district leader for leadership, assessment, curriculum, and instruction, Michele led critical systems-level work in her district to implement TIA alongside key initiatives, including District of Innovation, strategic staffing, teacher residency, and new teacher mentor programs to support teacher recruitment and retention in the district and region.

Patricia Ocaña is a former elementary and secondary educator dedicated to bilingual education and equitable learning settings. Her passion for the field inspired her to transition to The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), where she serves as a faculty Site Coordinator for the Miner Teacher Residency and Mentorship Program. Patricia Ocaña's experience as an emergent bilingual motivates her commitment to supporting and promoting linguistic diversity and equity for all students. Her pathway from classroom teacher to working with teacher candidates and novice teachers highlights her commitment to fostering the next generation of educators committed to creating equitable learning spaces for all students. In addition to her role as Site Coordinator, Patricia Ocaña is also a Ph.D. candidate in UTEP's Teaching, Learning, and Culture program in the Literacy and Biliteracy strand. Her research focuses on language(s), culture, identity, literacy, and biliteracy in providing educational equity in our rich bilingual, bicultural region's schools. Her work is driven by a vision of a transformative approach to education that uplifts individuals and communities alike.