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California Should Invest in Teacher Residencies

By Charles Taylor Kerchner on February 18, 2016 1:53 PM | [No comments](#)

By Charles Taylor Kerchner and Devin Corrigan

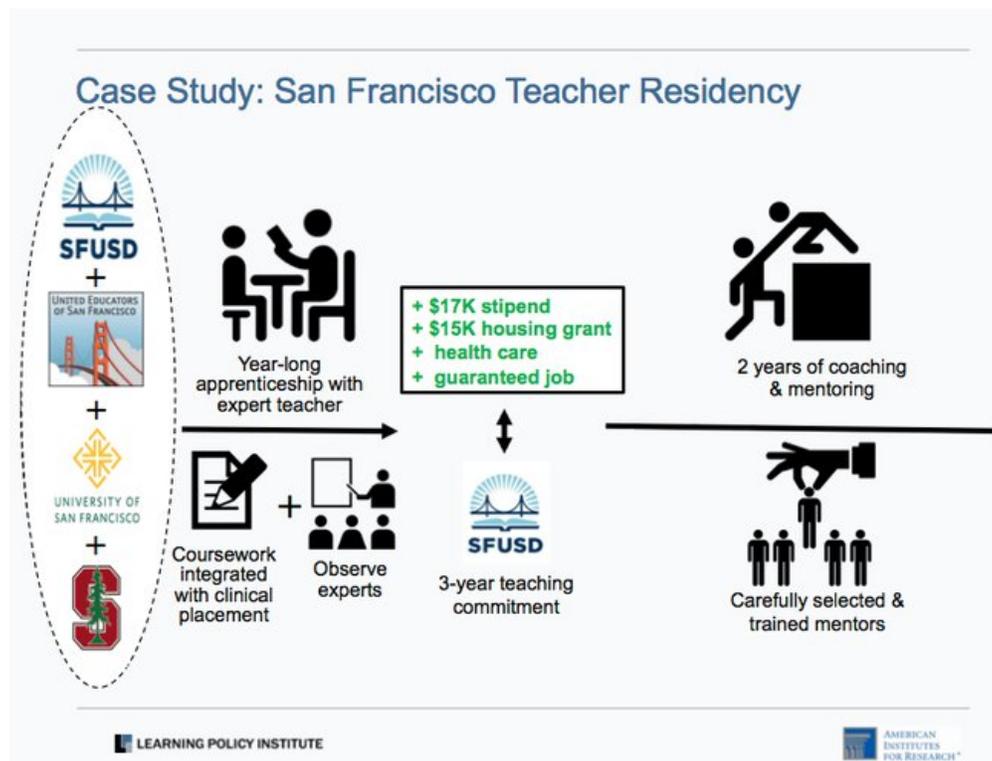
It's estimated to cost \$6-million to train a fighter pilot. A new physician's training costs over \$500,000. Training a service dog costs between \$7,000 and \$15,000. Given these metrics, why wouldn't we spend the \$30,000 or more for a first class teacher residency?

Recently, [three bills](#) were introduced in the California legislature to address the [deepening shortage](#) of teachers. They are timely. The supply of new teachers is at a 12 year low. Last year the state issued only about a third the credentials it did in 2008. Students are not lining up at the teacher ed recruiting table. ([Full report](#), and [infographic](#) from Learning Policy Institute.)

Allen Bill Would Support Residencies

One of the pieces of proposed legislation, introduced by [Sen. Ben Allen](#) (D-Santa Monica) would support teacher residency programs that mimic medical education's practice of pairing new practitioners with veterans. Rather than the traditional teacher education that often provide only weeks of classroom-based training, residencies last for a full school year or more. Residents train with veteran teacher mentors: an experience variously called an apprenticeship or clinical practice. When finished, they receive their teaching credential, often a Master's degree, and a job.

Residents are expected to make a commitment to the district in which they are trained, 3 to 7 years depending on the program. In return, they get various benefits: scholarships, load forgiveness, financial support for housing or health care, as [The San Francisco Teacher Residency](#). (Schematic graphic below from Guha and Fullbeck, Learning Policy Institute.)



The residency idea is relatively new; the first was launched in 2001. Participants are recruited, often with the specific needs of a district in mind, such as filling vacancies in shortage areas and expanding the diversity of the teaching force.

There are currently about 50 residency programs in the United States, and at least 10 of the programs are in California:

- Residency in Secondary Education at California State University Chico
- San Francisco Teacher Residency
- Fresno Teacher Residency
- Aspire Teacher Residency
- Kern Rural Teacher Residency
- Alliance Teacher Residency Program
- STEM Teachers in Advanced Residency at California State University Dominguez Hills
- UCLA IMPACT Urban Teacher Residency
- Los Angeles Urban Teacher Residency
- Central Coast Partnership for Teaching Excellence at California State University Monterey Bay and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo

Depending on the program, residencies are supported by formal partnerships between school districts or charter operators and universities, and sometimes by philanthropists. Most are funded through federal Teacher Quality Partnership Grants. Title II of the new Every Student Succeeds Act can provide support for teacher and school leadership development grants.

Positive Results

The results? Residency programs appear successful in attracting and retaining teachers of color: 66% in the San Francisco Teacher Residency Program compared to 49% district wide. Across the first seven cohorts, the Boston Teacher Residency graduates were less likely to be white compared with other new hires. Across the country, 38% of residency participants were people of color, twice the national average for new teachers.

Residencies also appeal to potential math and science teachers. In Boston, 62% of the new math teachers and 42% of new science teachers came through the residency program in 2009-2010.

Important to the building of school improvement, residency graduates are more likely to remain in teaching than those who enter the occupation through other means. In Boston, 86% of residency graduates were still working in the district after 3 years, compared with 53% of other new teachers. In San Francisco, 80% of residents were still in the district after 5 years.

Low turnover also makes residency programs economically attractive for school districts. The Learning Policy Institute estimates that finding a new teacher costs a district \$15,000-\$20,000 and that unprepared teachers are twice as likely to leave within five years.

When asked by researchers, principals overwhelmingly support residency programs. In San Francisco, 100% thought their graduates were more effective as did 83% of Boston principals.

It's been harder, partly for methodological reasons, to statistically associate residency graduates with standardized test score performance.

Linda Darling-Hammond, who chairs the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing and is president of the Learning Policy Institute, is a strong supporter:

Not only do they solve some of the most vexing problems, staffing high need districts with qualified and expert teachers, who stay, which has been a problem for decades. But also from a practical standpoint they allow us to better tap federal sources of funds...and to share the responsibility between the districts, the higher education community, and the state.

I asked Darling-Hammond about the operations of a residency in California:

I think that one strategy would be to have a state matching-grant where districts are challenged in some kind of competitive grants program to propose with higher ed partners the kinds of programs that they would mount or continue and expand. Then the most viable of those would be funded over a period of time, at least three to five years because you really want to get the legs under them.

The state might match the local share, which could be funded from contributions from AmeriCorps and the Teacher Quality Partnership Grants from the federal government Title II of the Higher Ed Act and Title II of the new ESSA. These are both places that could fund residency programs. Philanthropic and the business community might want to fill in the local share. The match from the state would incentivize that activity.

Districts could use the program to recruit people to shortage fields. And create program models where you get that full year of apprentice

teaching.

We are still many hearings, committee meetings and votes away from state assistance for a teacher residency program. Helping new teachers isn't as headline grabbing as bashing existing ones, but it will go a lot farther toward increasing the supply of novices dedicated to making teaching a career. And it will make a lot more fiscal sense than yet another cycle of teacher shortage and surplus.

Going deeper:

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