

# IMPACT REPORT

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**US PREP**

TEXAS TECH  
College of Education

## ECOSYSTEM-LEVEL CHANGE: PREPARING, SUPPORTING, AND RETAINING GREAT EDUCATORS

What if every student in every Texas classroom had a well-prepared, well-supported teacher? That vision is what launched US PREP—and what continues to guide its evolution from a Texas pilot to a national driver of educator preparation reform.

Since its founding, US PREP has worked across universities, districts, and state agencies to transform how educators are prepared and supported. We define the educator preparation ecosystem as the full continuum of institutions, policies, and people—spanning recruitment, preparation, staffing, and leadership. This work goes beyond redesigning teacher preparation programs: it reimagines the entire infrastructure that shapes teacher effectiveness, school staffing, and ultimately, student success.

With a coalition of 36 universities—including 20 in Texas—US PREP now leads one of the most ambitious educator preparation reform efforts in the country. Backed by over \$70 million in public and private investment and driven by strong, measurable results, the coalition is proving what's possible when preparation is grounded in research, aligned with workforce needs, and supported by policy.



## CORE LEVERS OF ECOSYSTEM IMPACT

US PREP's work is anchored in five core levers that collectively support transformation at every level of the educator pipeline (see Figure 1):

**Residency Transformation:** Supporting educator preparation programs and school districts to co-design and implement full-year clinical residencies that merge coursework with immersive, mentored classroom experience. These models elevate the profession by ensuring that aspiring teachers are deeply prepared before leading a classroom on their own.

**Pipeline to Leadership (P2L):** Reimagines how schools are staffed, how schedules are structured, and how teacher leader roles are designed—all to ensure students receive the support they need to succeed. By integrating preparation, staffing, and leadership development, P2L builds sustainable talent pipelines that strengthen schools and classrooms from day one.

FIGURE 1: CORE LEVERS OF ECOSYSTEM IMPACT



**Partnership Pathways:** Aligning higher education, community colleges, and districts to remove friction in recruitment, admissions, transfer, and enrollment into preparation programs. This work strengthens the pipeline from entry into the profession through licensure, with a focus on increasing access for local candidates.

**Communities of Practice:** Creating structured spaces for peer learning and innovation through regional and statewide learning networks. These communities allow institutions and systems to collaboratively solve problems, share lessons, and build collective capacity across contexts.

**Evidence, Scaling, & Sustainability:** Working with researchers, funders, and policymakers to identify, codify, and expand what works. US PREP's evidence-based approach enables partners to measure progress, demonstrate impact, and inform policy reform at the state and national level.



## STATEWIDE SCALE: BUILDING SYSTEMS FROM THE GROUND UP

US PREP's influence now reaches well beyond its original network—catalyzing state-wide change through strategic partnerships, scalable pilot models, and sustained policy engagement. At the heart of US PREP's model is a belief that teacher preparation is an ecosystem challenge—one that requires alignment across institutions, systems, and policies. Through strategic technical assistance, capacity-building, and cross-sector coalition work, US PREP enables its partners to build, scale, and sustain high-quality, practice-based pathways into teaching that are effective.

## RESIDENCY TRANSFORMATION: BUILDING TEXAS' NEXT GENERATION OF TEACHERS

This year marked a milestone in US PREP's mission to fundamentally transform teacher preparation across Texas. With the addition of six new universities—University of North Texas at Denton, Texas Wesleyan University, Texas A&M University–San Antonio, West Texas A&M University, Midwestern State University, and University of Houston–Clear Lake—the coalition now includes 36 institutions, 20 of which are in Texas. Together, teacher residents from US PREP coalition universities have reached over 5.6 million students—demonstrating the wide-reaching impact of our collaborative efforts.

This expanding network forms a powerful, interconnected infrastructure that is reshaping how educators are prepared across the state and beyond—embedding research-based practices into preparation pipelines and driving lasting change in classrooms, communities, and policy.

**36**  
coalition  
universities

**20 in Texas**

**5.6+ Million**  
Students Reached

**\$70 Million**  
Funds Invested

Over **10,000+** New Teachers  
Produced Per Year

## EVIDENCE OF IMPACT: STUDENT OUTCOMES, TEACHER RETENTION, AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

A growing body of rigorous research confirms that US PREP's transformed residency model produces measurable, lasting outcomes for students and schools—especially in historically underserved communities.

### Stronger Student Achievement

A 2022 study<sup>1</sup> by Dr. Jessica Gottlieb and Dr. Jacob Kirksey at Texas Tech University found that teachers prepared through the US PREP residency model significantly improve academic outcomes for PK–12 students, including English learners, students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), and students with disabilities.

Key findings include:

- **Improved Math Performance:** Students taught by residency-prepared teachers scored higher in math than those taught by peers from other preparation pathways.
- **Significant Reading Gains:** These were the only students to show statistically significant gains in reading achievement based on teacher preparation pathway.
- **Faster Growth in Effectiveness:** By years 2 and 3 in the classroom, residency-prepared teachers showed the largest gains in student outcomes, improving at a faster rate than peers from traditional or alternative pathways.

Complementing these results, a study by the Education Policy Initiative at Carolina (EPIC)<sup>2</sup> found that classrooms led by a mentor teacher paired with a paid resident consistently achieve higher student performance. **Paid residents demonstrated exceptional effectiveness, particularly in reading, performing at a level equivalent to teachers with five years of experience from their very first year.**

### Higher Teacher Retention

Residency-prepared teachers don't just start strong—they stay longer. A multi-year study by EPIC<sup>3</sup> examined four cohorts of first-year teachers in Texas (2016–17

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1. Jessica Gottlieb and Jacob Kirksey, *Evaluating the Impact of the US PREP Residency Model on Student Achievement* (Texas Tech University, 2022), <https://ttu-ir.tdl.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/75abbc49-47b0-4466-a209-55d4fd35e1c0/content>.

2. Education Policy Initiative at Carolina (EPIC), *Paid Residency Programs in Texas: Initial Impacts on Student Achievement and Teacher Retention* (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, November 2024), <https://epic.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1268/2024/11/Paid-Residency-Programs-in-Texas.pdf>.

3. Education Policy Initiative at Carolina (EPIC), *US PREP Transformed Model: Initial Results* (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2024), [https://epic.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1268/2024/01/USPREP\\_transformed\\_model\\_initial\\_results.pdf](https://epic.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1268/2024/01/USPREP_transformed_model_initial_results.pdf).

through 2019–20) and found that those who completed a yearlong residency were significantly more likely to remain in the classroom. Specifically:

- **Statewide Retention:** 92.2% of residency-trained teachers remained in Texas public schools through their third year—7 percentage points higher than traditionally prepared teachers and nearly 11 points higher than those from alternative certification pathways.
- **Same-School Retention:** 65.2% stayed at their initial school for three years—7 points higher than traditional programs and almost 13 points higher than alternative routes.

EPIC's analysis suggests that if beginning teachers from traditional or alternative programs had retention rates matching those of residency graduates, Texas would have needed 8,000 fewer new teachers over this four-year span. Considering the national average attrition cost of \$20,000 per new district hire, investing in residency programs could save Texas schools over \$40 million annually in hiring and induction costs. These savings grow over time alongside improved PK–12 student achievement.

## Long-Term Economic Benefits for Students

Complementary research by Dr. Kirksey highlights the broader societal and economic stakes. A 2024 policy brief from Dr. Kirksey found that students taught by underprepared teachers—such as those uncertified or trained through fast-track online programs—not only lose months of academic learning but also face long-term income penalties.

In contrast, students taught by residency-prepared teachers gain more academically and reap long-term wage benefits, reinforcing the value of investing in high-quality teacher preparation.

**The takeaway is clear:** How we prepare teachers shapes how students succeed—academically, professionally, and economically. Residencies don't just close opportunity gaps; they build pathways to lifelong opportunity.

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## POLICY BREAKTHROUGH: TEXAS' RESIDENCY CERTIFICATION PATHWAY

This growing body of evidence—coupled with US PREP's expanding coalition of partners—helped lay the foundation for a historic policy win in 2024: the creation of Texas' first-ever Residency Certification Pathway.

This Residency Certification Pathway, the first of its kind in the country, is the result of relentless advocacy, coalition building, and data-driven influence led by US PREP in collaboration with partners across the state.

Key contributions include:

- **Strategic Provider Collaboration:** US PREP worked directly with its partner institutions to ensure the policy was responsive to on-the-ground realities, aligning to both university capabilities and district workforce needs.
- **Data-Driven Advocacy:** We provided compelling evidence from research that yearlong residencies increase teacher quality, improve retention, and drive student achievement—data that proved critical in shaping legislative support.
- **Policy Design and Thought Partnership:** US PREP contributed to policy design through key advisory roles, including participation in Educate Texas' Teaching and Learning Council, and collaboration with policy-focused organizations like Education Trust.
- **Statewide Awareness and Engagement:** Through webinars, media campaigns, and public testimony, US PREP galvanized support across the field—helping stakeholders understand that this wasn't just a new certification track, but a fundamental reimagining of how the state grows its teacher workforce.

This policy breakthrough establishes a new baseline for quality in teacher preparation. It reflects a decisive shift from fragmented approaches toward a unified, statewide strategy grounded in research, practice, and shared accountability.



## STRATEGIC STAFFING FOR RESIDENTS: TURNING PILOTS INTO STATE POLICY

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What began as localized experiments in school staffing has now become a cornerstone of Texas's teacher preparation strategy. US PREP's technical assistance helped launch early residency pilots that demonstrated the power of leveraging residents to support school needs and in turn, schools paid the residents—and the state took notice.

These models have now become foundational to multiple state-funded initiatives, contributing to over \$400 million in investment. That includes state appropriations and district contributions.

- **20 Education Service Centers trained** in providing Strategic Staffing with Residents Technical Assistance
- **Over 150 school districts** across Texas are now implementing Strategic Staffing for Residents.
- **More than 1,200 paid residents** are supported annually through these models.
- Each resident receives an **average stipend of \$18,000**, creating a financially viable on-ramp to the teaching profession.

These positions do more than ease financial burdens. They deliver a **full year of immersive, mentored classroom experience**, producing new teachers who are better prepared, more likely to stay in the field, and more equitably distributed across high-need schools.

## A NEW ERA FOR TEXAS EDUCATORS

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The ripple effects of these accomplishments are profound:

**Aspiring teachers** now have access to high-quality, affordable, and immersive residency experiences.

**Districts** gain a more stable, better-prepared pipeline of incoming teachers.

**Students**, especially those in historically under-resourced communities, benefit from more consistent access to excellent teaching.

**Policymakers** now have a scalable model that pairs research with reality.

With a strong coalition, an evidence-backed model, and landmark policy wins, US PREP is no longer piloting innovation—it is shaping the future of teacher preparation in Texas and beyond.



## US PREP CONTINUES TO INNOVATE: SHAPING THE FUTURE OF THE EDUCATION ECOSYSTEM

Even as its early innovations are being scaled into statewide policy, US PREP is relentlessly advancing the field—designing and testing the next generation of transformative strategies. With a proven track record, US PREP has earned the trust and credibility to serve as a statewide leader in technical assistance and innovation, exemplified by initiatives such as the Texas Mentor Initiative and Pipeline to Leadership. By cultivating deep partnerships with districts, universities, and community colleges and building regional ecosystem models, US PREP is creating the infrastructure, tools, and approaches that will redefine educator preparation, staffing, and leadership—ensuring lasting impact for students across Texas and beyond.

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## TEXAS MENTOR TEACHER TRAINING INITIATIVE: STRENGTHENING THE BACKBONE OF TEACHER PREPARATION

In 2024, US PREP received the Texas State Mentor grant—a landmark opportunity to design and implement a high-impact mentorship model for aspiring and novice teachers statewide. This initiative is not an add-on; it is the glue holding the educator pipeline together.

Initiative Goals:

- **Design Comprehensive Professional Learning:** Develop curriculum, standards, and competencies to prepare cooperating teachers, mentors, educator preparation supervisors, and school leaders for effective support roles.
- **Pilot Across Diverse Contexts:** Partner with four Texas school districts to test and refine the mentorship model with cooperating teachers, mentors, principals, and district leaders.

- **Train-the-Trainer for Statewide Reach:** Equip Education Service Center (ESC) staff across all 20 regions with the tools, materials, and training to scale the model effectively.

Through this initiative, US PREP is building a statewide network of skilled mentor educators and educator preparation supervisors, establishing consistently high-quality support that spans preparation through induction.

## PIPELINE TO LEADERSHIP: REDESIGNING EDUCATOR ECOSYSTEMS

Across Texas and the nation, districts face a common challenge: fragmented efforts to recruit, prepare, and retain teachers and leaders. Professional development, high-quality instructional materials (HQIM), coaching, and leadership training often operate in isolation, limiting long-term impact.



US PREP's Pipeline to Leadership (P2L) initiative breaks through this fragmentation. By integrating teacher preparation, school staffing, and leadership development into a single, coherent ecosystem, P2L delivers scalable, systemic change.

P2L is currently piloted in seven forward-thinking districts:

- Hearne ISD
- Edgewood ISD
- Clint ISD
- Spring ISD
- Fort Worth ISD
- Harlingen CISD
- San Antonio ISD

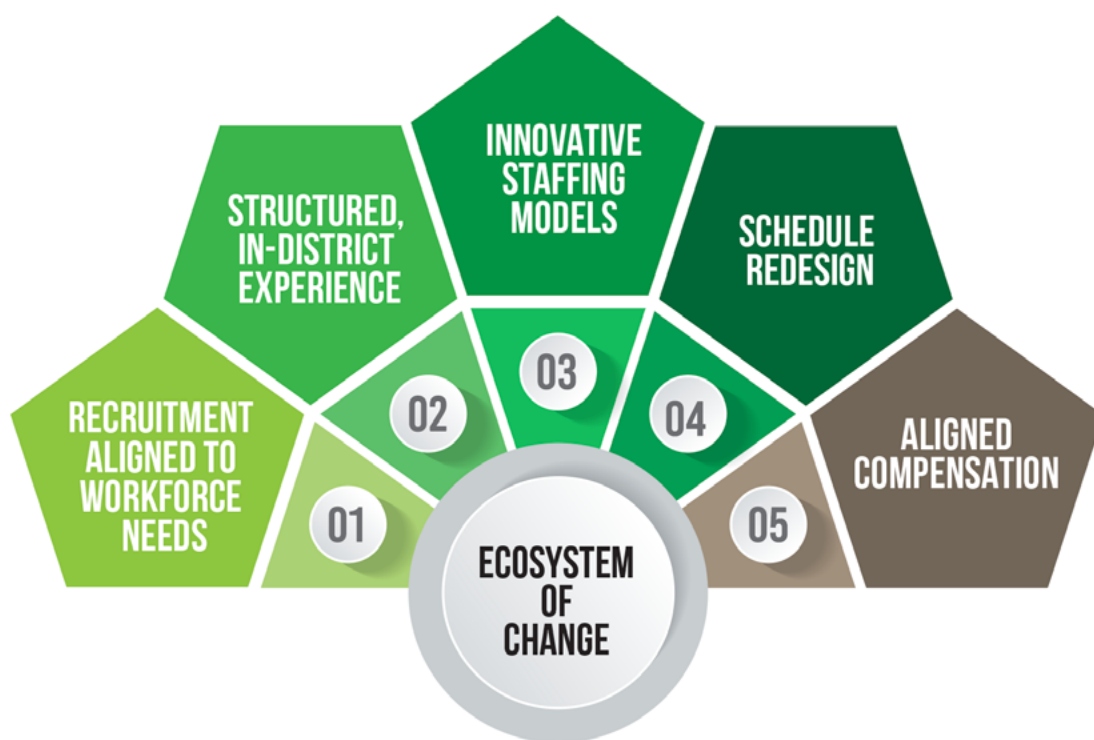
An additional six districts are preparing to launch P2L by January 2026, marking a major step toward statewide transformation.

### ***P2L's Five Pillars of Systemic Change:***

- **Recruitment Aligned to Workforce Needs:** Identifying and advising candidates into preparation programs built for real-world demands.
- **Structured, In-District Experience:** Embedding aspiring educators in classrooms for guided, mentored practice.

- **Innovative Staffing Models:** Leveraging strategic staffing to extend the reach of effective educators.
- **Schedule Redesign:** Increasing planning time and creating space for embedded professional learning, co-teaching, and student access to highly effective teachers.
- **Aligned Compensation:** Rewarding new roles and responsibilities to promote retention and sustainability.

P2L is more than a reform; it is a blueprint for transforming how entire education systems develop, support, and advance educators. By aligning school improvement with human capital development, it ensures instructional quality, leadership growth, and student opportunity advance together. Over the next five years, US PREP will train all Education Service Centers across Texas, cementing a statewide framework for lasting, systemic change.



## REGIONAL HUBS: LOCAL INNOVATION DRIVING STATEWIDE SCALE

US PREP's statewide impact is powered by deep, place-based partnerships that foster local ownership, innovation, and collective learning. Each regional hub acts as a testing ground for scalable solutions that inform broader state-level strategies.

- **San Antonio:** A citywide community of practice aligns universities and districts to build a cohesive pipeline focused on recruitment, retention, and shared goals.

- **Fort Worth and Waco:** Both regions are advancing P2L and building “grow your own” teacher pathways.
- **Houston HEART:** A bold cross-sector initiative uniting 6 universities and 7 community colleges to streamline teacher pipelines. HEART’s design includes aligned degree pathways, shared governance, real-time data dashboards, and compliance with HB 8 to ensure seamless, student-centered transitions from preparation to practice.

Together, these hubs prove that regional innovation can power scalable, statewide change—strengthening pipelines, improving instruction, and reimagining how schools are staffed and led.

## EXPANSION, INVESTMENT, AND INNOVATION: SCALING IMPACT ACROSS TEXAS AND BEYOND

US PREP’s influence continues to grow, fueled by strategic investments and an expanding network of partners. In 2024 alone, the organization secured over \$18 million in new funding, bringing total investment since its founding to more than \$70 million from over 25 sources—including philanthropic foundations, state and federal agencies, and contracts. This funding supports both innovation and the scaling of proven models, enabling US PREP to extend its impact across classrooms, districts, and institutions.

Just months ago, Texas passed House Bill 2 (HB 2), marking a historic inflection point in teacher preparation. This legislation directs millions of dollars in public funding to redesign how teachers are recruited, prepared, mentored, and retained across the state. It reflects a bold commitment to teacher quality as a key driver of student success and economic opportunity.

US PREP played a central role in shaping this policy agenda. The residency and strategic staffing models first developed through US PREP are now codified and supported through state funding and a statewide technical assistance infrastructure. HB 2 is more than a funding milestone—it is a structural transformation that places high-quality teacher preparation at the center of Texas’ education system. It represents the culmination of years of collaborative work and the beginning of a new era in which every student is taught by a well-prepared teacher, and every teacher is supported to thrive.

With sustained investment, a rapidly growing network, and a proven track record of policy and practice innovation, US PREP is not just expanding its footprint—it is setting the standard for systemic change in education. From piloting transformative residencies to establishing statewide staffing models, mentoring systems, and leadership pipelines, US PREP is building a future in which strong, prepared, and supported educators are the foundation for lasting student success.