



## BOSTON TEACHER RESIDENCY: HOW IT WORKS

### Curriculum

The Boston Teacher Residency (BTR) prepares teacher candidates to become highly effective Boston Public School (BPS) teachers through a curriculum that marries a full-year, in-school residency with master's level coursework tailored to BPS' instructional agenda. During the school year, teacher residents work side-by-side with mentor teachers four days per week while engaging in coursework that grounds the daily practice of teaching in theory and research. The BTR curriculum is designed to cultivate high-performing teachers who are prepared for the realities of urban teaching.

#### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**Student learning is what matters most.** At its core, the BTR curriculum is about building a culture of achievement for all students and developing the skills and mindset of new teachers to do so. During their practicum and seminar classes, teacher residents learn how to collect evidence of student learning through observations, assessments, and examinations of student work, and how to use this data to optimize instruction for their students. The beginning of every seminar is devoted to a discussion of student learning data gathered by residents in the prior week, with particular attention to gaining knowledge of students' strengths and building on their assets to attain equitable and excellent outcomes for all students.

**Effective teachers make deliberate, data-driven decisions.** BTR's inquiry-driven curriculum provides teacher residents with ongoing opportunities to study best practices, try them out in the classroom, reflect on the results, adjust, and try again. Residents are asked to continually consider the research, rationale, and data behind their decisions about curriculum and instruction. They use the *BTR Cycle of Inquiry* framework to collect evidence of student learning, analyze patterns of student achievement, develop hypotheses to investigate, and refine instruction based on what they learn.

**Public collaboration around teaching practice improves teaching quality.** While the learning trajectory of every teacher may vary, BTR understands that teachers learn best in a community of colleagues. Throughout the residency year, teacher residents reflect on and refine their practice through collaboration with peers, mentor teachers, and other practitioners. Teacher residents participate in *Grand Rounds*, during which they observe master teachers and then debrief together; they also regularly review and analyze videos of their own and other teachers' instruction in order to improve their craft.

#### KEY STRUCTURES

- ✦ *Seamless integration of theory and practice:* The BTR curriculum carefully aligns graduate-level coursework with lessons from the classroom. Teacher residents read and discuss leading research and best practices and then work with their mentor teachers to employ these same strategies within their residency classrooms. At the same time, residents bring their classroom experiences back to their courses and, with peers and instructors, reflect upon what worked to improve student learning, what didn't, and why.
- ✦ *Spiraling curriculum:* The BTR curriculum is cyclic, deepening teacher residents' understanding by revisiting topics of study as residents assume greater responsibility in their residency classrooms. At the beginning of the school year, teacher residents assess the impact of their teaching on individual students; as the year continues, they learn how to reassess and refine instruction to meet the needs of all students in their classes.
- ✦ *Emphasis on the BPS context:* BTR facilitates the success of its graduates by providing teacher residents with solid grounding in the BPS-specific curriculum they will be expected to teach and BPS' professional teaching standards, *The Dimensions of Effective Teaching*, on which they will be evaluated. Residents also explore the history of schooling and school reform in Boston and the issues of power and inequity accompany that history, in order to better understand the current climate and educational goals of the district. They are encouraged to raise questions, engage with community members and colleagues, and find their own voices in conversations about school culture and student engagement and achievement.