



BOSTON TEACHER RESIDENCY: HOW IT WORKS

Mentoring and Host Schools

The Boston Teacher Residency (BTR) places teacher residents with highly effective mentor teachers for a year-long practicum experience that integrates lessons from coursework with the daily practice of teaching in the Boston Public Schools (BPS). Unlike the traditional one-on-one student teacher model, BTR empowers cohorts of mentor teachers to take collective responsibility for developing the capacity of all teacher residents at their school and for advancing the school's reform initiatives. Under the direction of their school's site director, mentor teachers and teacher residents work as a cohort in a year-long teaching and learning collaboration.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Teachers – especially beginning teachers – benefit from working in schools that support collaboration. In BTR's host schools, teacher residents have the immediate support of a cluster of peers and experienced mentor teachers as they assume increasing responsibility for student learning. Similar to teaching hospitals, host schools provide residents with opportunities to engage in formal and informal conversations focused on teaching practice and student outcomes.

Effective mentors of new teachers are also learners. BTR hires mentor teachers who are skilled in instructing students and adults, interested in advancing their own professional learning, and reflective about their practice. BTR supports mentor teachers' transition into the role of teacher-educators and helps them develop mentoring relationships in which beliefs and values about learning and teaching are openly discussed and reflected upon.

Vertical career options, such as mentoring, build the instructional capacity of schools. By serving as BTR mentor teachers, site directors, and course instructors, second-stage and veteran teachers have the opportunity to assume leadership responsibilities while remaining in the classroom. Through BTR trainings and their work with teacher residents, these experienced teachers broaden their professional knowledge, advance their practice, and further their ability to impact teaching and learning in their school community.

KEY STRUCTURES

- ✦ **Professional support for mentor teachers:** BTR runs a summer institute and an ongoing monthly leadership course for mentor teachers that, like all BTR courses, focus first and foremost on student engagement and achievement. Using BPS's *Dimensions of Effective Teaching* and BTR's *Dimensions of Effective Mentoring* as frameworks, mentors review case studies, videos, student work, assessment data, and lesson plans as they learn strategies for coaching novice teachers and delivering data-based feedback on instruction. To support the alignment between BTR courses and classroom practice, mentors also explore core themes of the residency curriculum (e.g., equity, inquiry, and collaboration) within the context of the mentoring relationship.
- ✦ **Defined planning and collaboration time:** In addition to their ongoing conversations, BTR asks mentor-resident pairs to meet weekly for two hours of *Sacred Meeting Time* that is focused explicitly on BTR objectives. One of these hours is designated for co-planning and reviewing lesson plans. The other hour is devoted to a rotating schedule of observations with feedback, discussions of curricular objectives and upcoming units, and conversations about the resident's and mentor's work and the status of the mentor-resident relationship.
- ✦ **Site director role:** The site director at each host school serves as "lead instructor," supervising mentor teachers, who in turn supervise teacher residents. Site directors are responsible for creating a climate of support, collaboration, and accountability focused on student achievement. Among the site director responsibilities is implementation of *Grand Rounds*, in which teacher residents, mentor teachers, and other school staff observe teaching practice, collect and analyze student and teacher data, and discuss teaching moves that would further student engagement and achievement. Site directors also facilitate mentor-resident meetings to ensure the exchange of constructive, evidence-based feedback. Effective site directors are instructional leaders who navigate well between school-wide improvement efforts and the work of teaching and mentoring, helping mentors and residents coherently integrate their coursework and teaching experiences.