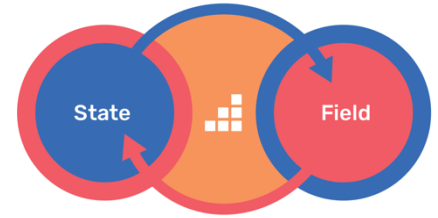


Theory of State System Change

Prepared To Teach recognizes that realizing a new vision for teacher preparation requires collaboration and trust. Our emerging theory of system-level change starts from the potential in two interconnected but fundamentally different spaces: **the state** and **the field**. Both possess levers for change that can empower and reinforce the other's efforts, transforming teacher preparation pathways to culminate in high-quality, paid residencies that center access, equity, and quality. When preparation is well-designed with strong P-20 partnership, the entire teacher development continuum benefits—from recruitment to later-career advancement opportunities. **Our approach** weaves together existing strengths and disconnected efforts into a cohesive system, centering partnership-based preparation as a foundational driver of educator effectiveness and student success.



STATE LEVERS

Signal from the top

Because so much of education is siloed and policy can change frequently, the field needs a clear signal that paid residencies are the goal. When state leadership promotes an overarching vision for preparation, practitioners, districts, and programs can embrace the work of program redesign in earnest.

Investment

When states lead, the entire system benefits. By investing in the removal of financial barriers to teaching and tying funds to high-quality residency standards, states can incentivize rigorous preparation without requiring competitive funding processes. Universal access to state-level investments encourages creative, cost-effective models that braid funding sources to amplify impact and ensure sustainability. Research shows that residency-prepared teachers stay in the profession longer and positively impact student learning, yielding a significant return on investment over time.

Expectations with flexibility

Well-designed residency policy should balance clear expectations with flexibility for local context. Rather than emphasizing competition or compliance-driven accountability, policy should establish quality design standards while preserving professional autonomy. Guidance and requirements must be structured enough to ensure consistency and rigor, yet flexible enough to leverage local strengths and foster shared commitment to successful residencies.

FIELD LEVERS

Collective efforts

Opportunities to build collective ownership of the vision for preparation create excitement and commitment to the work. Regularly scheduled meetings or collaborative work sessions are essential to energize those working across the P-20 field and support unity across the state. When partners collaborate—from co-designing clinical experiences to aligning expectations and support structures—outcomes improve.

Evidence

A shared commitment to evidence and strong data collection is essential to demonstrating the value of state investment in residencies. Grounding program design in research and identifying common data needs around program impact helps build confidence among state leaders. This orientation signals that the initiative is serious about continuous improvement and accountability—and that meaningful, high-quality evidence of residency outcomes will be available to inform future policy and investment decisions.

Narrative shift

Together, partnerships can create and promote new narratives that frame paid teacher residencies as a keystone of high-quality preparation, educator effectiveness, and student success. Elevating residencies through consistent messaging and storytelling helps foster a shared understanding that investment in strong preparation is central to improving outcomes across the education system.

INTERMEDIARY SPACE | How We Work

Too often, legislation creates new programs without investing in the capacity required to implement them well. Yet early implementation is when quality, coherence, and sustainability are most at risk, and therefore most critical to get right. As an intermediary partner, Prepared To Teach brings the added capacity needed to help states and local partnerships align their visions, strategies, and on-the-ground implementation. We understand that systems change doesn't happen just by creating new legislation or launching promising programs. Lasting transformation occurs through intentional collaboration between the state and the field—guided by responsive facilitation, trust-building, and a shared focus on quality.

Prepared To Teach identifies and promotes positive, mutually reinforcing shifts across policy, practice, and funding structures. We collect and consolidate relevant data, surface evidence of impact, and work alongside stakeholders to identify actionable levers—whether they are within reach or require longer-term development. Our strengths-based approach is designed to build the trust, infrastructure, and shared ownership needed to sustain change. We view our role as catalytic: accelerating transformation in educator preparation ecosystems so that states can ultimately lead and sustain the work while we move on to incubate change in other places seeking lasting change to their education systems.

Facilitating dialogue and collaboration



As neutral conveners, we create spaces for programs to exchange ideas, solve problems, and scale innovations tailored to local needs, all while facilitating critical conversations with state leadership. Communities of Practice (CoPs) are central to this approach, acting as a powerful engine for collaboration within and between the state and field.

Thought partnership and strategic guidance



With a decade of experience in shifting systems towards teacher residencies, we bring critical research, knowledge and capacity to state and local leaders. Our team provides ongoing strategic support to refine and align efforts with broader systemic goals to maximize impact, whether work begins with a collective of motivated programs or eager state leaders.

Creating tailored tools and resources



We create custom, evidence-based documents that respond directly to local needs, informing every aspect of residency programming, policy development, and partnership design. Our materials translate research into actionable guidance, ensuring alignment with best practices and contextual realities. Our hands-on support expands on local strengths to establish and encode processes and structures needed to design, implement, and scale high-quality, sustainable teacher preparation pathways.

Financial & programmatic sustainability



Because we focus on transforming systems as opposed to changing programs, sustainability is at the core of our project. Principles of sustainability are interwoven at every level of our work—from ensuring that funding sources are aligned with program structures, to establishing long-term trust and commitment between partners.

Movement building and narrative shift



We provide thought partnership and tools to analyze local, state, and national narrative landscapes, creating new policy goals and new narratives that advance those goals. Sharing stories of paid residencies and their residents broadens perspectives and prompts desired shifts, all culminating in a larger nationwide movement that advocates for systemic change in teacher preparation across the nation.

Learning and knowledge sharing



We partner with those leading the work on the ground to surface and document how change happens and how transformation processes are experienced. We use these learnings to translate knowledge in ways that can inform and support broader systems change in other state and local contexts.