

RTR Teacher and School Leader Residency Proposal

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Introduction: Project Partners/Background and Context

Purpose: The purpose of the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) RTR Teacher and School Leader Residency proposal is to further refine, expand, and evaluate the impact of the innovative RTR Teacher and School Leader Residency on teacher retention and student outcomes in high-need schools. This proposal addresses **Absolute Priority 4**, Partnership Grants for the Development of Leadership Programs in Conjunction with the Establishment of an Effective Teacher Residency Program, **Competitive Preference Priority 1**—Increasing Educator Diversity (see pages 43-44), **Competitive Preference Priority 2**—Supporting a Diverse Educator Workforce and Professional Growth to Support Student Learning (see pages 45-49), **Competitive Preference Priority 3**—Meeting Student Social, Emotional, and Academic Needs (see pages 37-42), and **Competitive Preference Priority 4**—Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (see pages 45-49). Additionally, this proposal addresses **Invitational Priority 1**-Partnership Grants for the Establishment of GYO Programs and Registered Apprenticeship Programs for K-12 Teachers (see pages 49-50) and **Invitational Priority 2** - Supporting Early Elementary Educators and School Leaders (see page 50).

Introduction: Project Partners/Background and Context

Partners on this grant proposal include Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), the VCU School of Education, the VCU College of Humanities and Sciences, RTR Teacher and School Leader Residency, and 10 school districts across the Commonwealth of Virginia. Located in Richmond, Virginia, VCU is an urban, public institution of higher education enrolling over 28,000 undergraduate and graduate students. VCU faculty attracts more than \$400 million in sponsored research funding, and the university is one of only 69 institutions public nationwide to

receive the Carnegie Foundation's designation as Research University with Very High Research Activity and Community Engagement. Designated a Minority Serving Institution (MSI) in 2022, the VCU student population is 47% minority. In 2021, the Gerontological Society of America also named VCU as an Age-Friendly University; VCU was the only institution in Virginia to receive this recognition.

The **VCU School of Education (SOE)** is ranked 25th among the top graduate schools of education, 16th among public graduate schools of education, 17th among public special education programs, and 45th in online master's in education programs, by *US News & World Report* (2024). SOE is nationally accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, and SOE faculty include individuals recognized as national leaders who have attracted more than \$40 million in funded research in fiscal year 2023.

The **VCU College of Humanities and Sciences (CHS)** has a long history of working collaboratively with the School of Education (SOE) and local K-12 educators. Evidence of this collaboration can be seen in the shared governance of: (1) the Policy Board for the Ph.D. in Education; and (2) the Professional Education Coordinating Council (PECC), a policy body regarding teacher education and licensure that has existed since the 1980s. The PECC has always had faculty and administrative representation from the CHS and the SOE, and in Spring 2004 modified its governance structure to include K-12 representatives as well. In addition, numerous SOE courses are cross listed with department offerings in the CHS.

RTR Teacher and School Leader Residency (formerly Richmond Teacher Residency) began as a partnership between VCU and Richmond Public Schools (RPS) to recruit, prepare, support, and retain highly effective teachers and teacher leaders committed to the students of RPS for the long-term. Originally funded in 2010 through a \$5.8 million Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP)

grant, the RTR Teacher Residency (RTR-TR) developed an intensive, year-long school-based teacher preparation model that combines the best of traditional and alternate route teacher preparation programs, ensuring that outstanding candidates are well prepared and profession-ready on their very first day as teachers of record. In 2017-2018, RTR-TR expanded beyond RPS, conducting a small foundation-funded pilot at Ettrick Elementary School in Chesterfield County Public Schools (CCPS). In 2018-2019, RTR-TR expanded into Petersburg City Public Schools (PCPS) and in 2019-2020 prepared its first cohort of residents for hard-to-staff schools in Henrico County Public Schools (HCPS). In 2021, the RTR School Leader Residency (RTR-SLR) was developed as an adaptation of the successful RTR-TR model. SLR addresses the critical need for administrators fully prepared to serve in schools with high populations of students with unmet needs (Jacobson, 2008; Levin et al., 2020). SLR combines university coursework culminating in a post-master's certificate in educational leadership with a year-long, intensive clinical experience in a high-need school setting. SLR was piloted in CCPS with one school leader resident and has expanded to RPS and HCPS. Over the 14 years of the program, RTR has prepared teachers and school leaders in Region 1 of Virginia. With the development of online modalities, RTR has been working to expand across all 8 regions of Virginia with the aim of preparing teachers and school leaders in high-need schools in urban, suburban, and rural school districts across the state.

Background of TQP Partnership: VCU has a strong history of working with Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to facilitate the educational success of students and the development of teachers and leaders. Beginning in the early 1990's, VCU established seven Professional Development Schools in the Metro Richmond area, including within our TQP partner LEAs. In 2001, the Metropolitan Educational Training Alliance (META), a partnership among six local

LEAs (including RPS and HCPS) and VCU, was established to promote student learning by improving the preparation, effectiveness, and retention of high-quality teachers. This proposal builds on this long history of partnerships and two earlier Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) grants received in 2010 and 2014 to design, implement, refine, and expand the RTR program. This proposal will enable the RTR Teacher and School Leader Residency to develop new partnerships with LEAs across the state to further refine, expand, and evaluate the impact of the innovative residency models on teacher retention and student outcomes in high-need schools.

The needs assessment in Appendix B presents data on the percentage of students from low-income families served by each school district as well as data on the percentage of provisionally licensed teachers in each district compared with state averages. More than 20% of the children served in each of the 10 partnering LEAs are children from low income families. The percentage of provisionally licensed teachers in eight of the partner LEAs is above the state average. While the percentage of provisionally licensed teachers in Waynesboro City Public Schools is slightly below the state average, the percentage of teachers teaching content that they are not fully endorsed to teach is significantly higher than the state average. Additionally, the needs assessment presents individual school-level data for partner LEAs highlighting the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch (FRL) demonstrating that more than 60% of the children in each school are eligible.

Brunswick County Public Schools is a small, rural Virginia school district that serves almost 1,400 students in three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. The median income in Brunswick County is just over \$50,000 and 30.3% of children live in poverty. The number of provisionally licensed teachers is almost double the state average and the on-time graduation rate is the second lowest of all of our proposed district partners.

Charles City County Public Schools is the fifth smallest school district in the Commonwealth serving around 550 students in one elementary school and one secondary school. For the 2022-2023 school year, over a third of students (36.8%) were chronically absent and missed more than 10% of the school year. The math pass rate on state standardized tests is 31%, which is 38% lower than the state average.

Essex County Public Schools is a small, rural Virginia school district with just over 1,000 students in one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school. The poverty rate is 13.3% and 70% of the county's students are identified as economically disadvantaged. Almost one-fifth of the teachers are provisionally licensed and 15.2% are teaching content in an area that they are not fully endorsed, which is almost 10% higher than the state average.

Henrico County Public Schools is a large, suburban district in the Metro Richmond area that serves over 50,000 students in 47 elementary schools, 12 middle schools, nine high schools, and one virtual school. The percentage of provisionally licensed teachers is above the state average and the amount of provisionally licensed teachers in the identified high need schools often doubles state averages.

Petersburg City Public Schools is an urban district serving 4,464 students in four elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. The average income in Petersburg is \$46,930 and 83% of children in Petersburg City Public Schools are considered economically disadvantaged. The chronic absenteeism rate is over 43%, which is more than double the state average of 19% and means almost half of the students are missing more than 10% of the school year. Nearly 1 in 4 residents over the age of 25 has not earned a high school diploma/equivalent.

Prince William County Public Schools is a large suburban district located in northern Virginia with over 90,000 students in 64 elementary schools, 17 middle schools, 16 high schools,

and two non-traditional schools. Prince William County Public Schools is the second largest school district in Virginia and the 34th largest in the nation, encompassing a wide-ranging demographic foundation. Thirty elementary schools, eight middle schools, and three high schools receive Title I funding. Over a quarter of the students are English Learners and they have the second largest population of ELs in the state. The number of provisionally licensed teachers in Prince William County Public Schools is higher than the state average.

Richmond City Public Schools, the original urban RTR school district partner, serves more than 21,000 students in 26 elementary, seven middle, and eight high schools. The poverty rate in Richmond is 21.7% which is more than double the state average and 66.5% of students are considered economically disadvantaged. The on-time graduation rate for Richmond City Public Schools is 72.4%, which is more than 15% less than the state average. Additionally, 17% of the teachers are provisionally licensed, which is almost double the state average.

Stafford County Public Schools is a suburban Virginia school district with 31,700 students in 17 elementary schools, 8 middle schools, and 5 high schools. Thirteen percent of the teachers in Stafford County Public schools are provisionally licensed, which is almost 5% more than the state average. Additionally, 10% of teachers are teaching content areas where they are not fully endorsed, which is also above the state average. Both reading and math pass rates on state standardized tests are below the state average.

Surry County Public Schools is a small, rural, geographically isolated school district. Surry serves 694 students in one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school. The number of provisionally licensed teachers in the county is almost three times that of the state average, and over half of the county's students are identified as economically disadvantaged.

Waynesboro City Public Schools is a small Virginia school district with just over 3,000 students in four elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. The median household income in the city is just over \$52,000 and the poverty rate is 16.1%, which is over 6% higher than the state average. Over half of the student population is economically disadvantaged and standardized test scores are 15% below the state average in reading and 19% below the state average in math.

Background and Context. This proposal builds on over a decade of success for the VCU RTR Teacher Residency program in addressing critical teacher shortages in Metro Richmond school districts (called divisions in Virginia). RTR has prepared 372 teachers, 10 school leaders, has served more than 80 schools, developed more than 250 mentors, and reached more than 36,000 students to date. Program evaluation findings support the positive impact of RTR-TR on student achievement using a robust quasi-experimental design with a matched comparison group, controlling for students' prior achievement and background variables. The impact evaluation found students of RTR teachers scored higher on the 2018 Social Studies (24 pts.), English (18 pts.), and Math (34 pts.) statewide standardized exams compared to students in classrooms of non-RTR teachers with the same years of experience (approximate effect size was .16 *SD*). Recent evaluation findings have also indicated higher rates of retention for RTR-prepared versus non-RTR prepared teachers, as well as higher rates of preparation for teachers in math and science, a critical shortage area.

The impact and success of VCU/RTR are recognized at the local, state, and national levels. An initial federal investment in 2010 to design and implement a teacher residency program has been leveraged to secure financial support for RTR from (1) annual Virginia appropriations of over \$1 million that support the living stipend for residents; (2) partner school

district investments that support the cost of mentor stipends and training and new teacher coaches who support RTR graduates for their first two years as the teachers of record; and (3) more than \$700K in funding from the philanthropic community.

The idea of leveraging RTR's success to design and implement a school leader residency stemmed from three concurrent developments: (1) the demographics of schools served by RTR; (2) higher turnover rate of school leaders in hard-to-staff schools; and (3) focus groups and exit interviews with RTR graduates that identified school leadership as a primary factor in their retention decisions. These led VCU and its RTR school district partners to explore how they could collaborate to prepare a cadre of highly effective school leaders as a critical step towards building an infrastructure for increasing student achievement, teacher retention, and school improvement in high-need schools. According to Brown and Wynn (2007; 2009), principals who demonstrate an awareness of issues affecting teacher turnover lead with a proactive rather than reactive approach in supporting new teachers; and are committed to professional growth for both new and veteran teachers, have a higher rate of retention in their schools than those of their peers. Teachers who report frequent collaboration and shared leadership with their principals stay in their schools (Urlick, 2016; 2020). Waddell (2010) found that relationships between teachers and principals are crucial to teacher retention and contribute significantly to teachers' decisions to affirm their commitment to urban schools and that leaders can actually improve teacher retention without specific initiatives or resources. Therefore, a school leader residency model became the focus of multiple planning meetings with regional K-12 leaders between winter 2018 and winter 2020. When project leaders presented the residency program concept at a September 2019 RTR Advisory Board Meeting, it was embraced by all district leaders. In January 2020, a local philanthropic foundation, the R.E.B. Foundation provided funding of \$332,966 to plan and

pilot a school leader residency for six future school leaders (assistant principals, principals, other school district leadership roles) over the course of two years. Piloted with one resident at a hard-to-staff school in CCPS, SLR is currently enrolling its third cohort of school leader residents in RPS and HCPS.

While the RTR Teacher and School Leader Residency has historically partnered with school districts located close to VCU, the growing interest in the program from LEAs across the state to meet their staffing needs, coupled with advances in technology for online learning, have created an opportunity for the expansion of RTR. TQP funding will allow us to build on our successful models of teacher and school leader preparation, expanding the program to high-need LEAs outside of the Metro Richmond area, while maintaining research-based, rigorous graduate-level curriculum to fully prepare teachers and school leaders to meet the needs of students in the high-need schools they serve.

Section A. Quality of Project Design

A.1. Project Rationale: The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) recently noted troubling trends in Virginia’s teacher workforce; the number of teacher vacancies in Virginia for the 2023-2024 school year exceeded those from pre-pandemic years, and a greater number of teachers do not have a full license nor adequate preparation for the content they are teaching (JLARC, 2023). This state data aligns with nationwide trends regarding teacher shortages (ERS, 2024). Reasons for teacher attrition often include teachers feeling unprepared for the work or unsupported by school leaders (García & Weiss, 2019). Likewise, research on school leader attrition notes a lack of preparation for the responsibilities of the job (Levin et al., 2019). Teacher and school leader attrition is experienced more often in high-need schools, with one often influencing the other (e.g., DeMatthews, et al., 2022; Lochmiller, et al., 2024).

RTR-TR was developed in response to these retention issues in high-need schools. Based on research indicating that traditional preparation programs lack the in-depth field experiences in high-need settings needed for preservice teachers and school leaders to feel fully prepared to become teachers and school leaders of record (e.g., Ingersoll & Perda, 2009; Jacobson, 2008), RTR developed a model weaving the strengths of the traditional VCU preparation programs with a nontraditional path - a residency model - to meet these challenges. Over the last 14 years, this model has been implemented in Metro Richmond school districts. Our proposal builds upon lessons learned throughout the years as we seek to expand to meet the needs of school districts across the state. The RTR program design applies findings from current research, responds to feedback from RTR graduates, and addresses the staffing challenges faced by partner LEAs. The overarching goal of this proposal is to further refine, expand, and evaluate the impact of the innovative RTR Teacher and School Leader Residency on teacher retention and student outcomes in high-need schools across the state. To meet this goal, our objectives are:

Objective 1: Refine and implement an integrated teacher and school leader residency program for high-need schools.

Objective 2: Strengthen the instructional leadership capacity of school leader residents and leadership mentors while enhancing the practices of teacher residents.

Objective 3: Promote a collaborative culture of continuous improvement that supports the social, emotional, and academic needs of students.

Objective 4: Develop and implement a model for continuous professional growth and community engagement among school leaders and teachers.

At the core of our RTR Teacher and School Leader Residency model are two evidence-based interventions that meet the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards of evidence: **a job-embedded residency and training in instructional coaching and mentoring.**

Key components of a **year-long, job-embedded, school leader-mentor supported residency** are based on the findings of *Preparing principals to raise student achievement: Implementation and effects of the New Leaders Program in ten districts* (Gates, et al., 2014). The quasi-experimental study examined the impact of principals prepared by *New Leaders* on the achievement outcomes of 6,706,262 students in high-need schools, grades K-12. The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) review determined the study met the group design standards with reservations (version 3.0), demonstrated a positive effect on the relevant outcome of student achievement, and provides promising evidence for the proposed program components. RTR-SLR follows the evidence-based components of the *New Leaders* intervention: (1) selective recruitment and admission; (2) training and endorsement (year-long residency); and (3) support for school leaders early in their tenures.

RTR's emphasis of an **instructional coaching and mentoring model** is based on the findings of the *Impacts of Comprehensive Teacher Induction: Final Results from a Randomized Controlled Study* (Glazerman et al., 2010). The study examined the student achievement outcomes of the comprehensive New Teacher Center (NTC) teacher induction program using data collected from 1,009 beginning teachers in 17 high-poverty, high-minority schools districts. The study met WWC standards without reservations (version 3.0), showing a positive and statistically significant effect of the induction model on student achievement. For more than a decade RTR has used the NTC instructional coaching and mentoring model and adapted the model for teacher preparation. In 2006, the VCU Center for Teacher Leadership (CTL) received funding through a Title II Part A State Council of Higher Education for Virginia grant to become licensed to conduct the research-based, highly effective NTC mentor teacher training. As previously noted, RTR is now reporting statistically significant outcomes on student

achievement, a finding that aligns with existing evidence about the success of the NTC model. In addition to the NTC model being utilized to train mentors and new teacher coaches working with teacher residents, the model has been further adapted for use with school leaders, their mentors, and career coaches.

RTR will use the evidenced-based components of the two studies cited as the basis for Objectives 1&2. In addition to the WWC evidence-based core project components, RTR's model is guided by research. Teacher quality and attrition, particularly in high-need settings, have long been studied. Researchers have noted that preparing teachers within a high-need school can help them become more effective teachers in the high-need school setting who remain in the profession longer (e.g., Kolman et al., 2015; Ronfeldt, 2012). RTR-TR's year-long clinical experience in a high-need school addresses these research findings; residents become fully prepared to teach in the high-need setting through this program. Additionally, research demonstrates the importance of a trained mentor during the preservice teaching experience (Kang, 2021) and an induction program to support new teachers, especially in high-need schools (Redding & Nguyen, 2020). As noted above, RTR utilizes the NTC mentor teacher training; mentors and new teacher coaches are trained to provide support and guidance to residents and program graduates.

In preparing school leaders, we incorporate the findings of a 2021 research report commissioned by the Wallace Foundation entitled *How Principals Affect Students and Schools: A Systematic Synthesis of Two Decades of Research* by Grissom, Egalite, and Lindsay. The report reviewed both quantitative and qualitative studies and identified three overlapping areas of skills and expertise that school leaders need to be successful: instruction, people, and organization and

four classes of behaviors that the research suggests produce positive school outcomes. They include:

- Engaging in instructionally focused interactions with teachers.
- Building a productive school climate.
- Facilitating productive collaboration and professional learning communities.
- Managing personnel and resources strategically. (Grissom et al., 2021, p. xv)

Based on two decades of research, Grissom, Eyal, and Lindsay conclude that “the impact of an effective principal has likely been understated, with impacts being both greater and broader than previously believed: greater in the impact on student achievement and broader in affecting other important outcomes, including teacher satisfaction and retention (especially among high-performing teachers), student attendance, and reductions in exclusionary discipline” (Grissom et al., 2021, p. ix).

A.2. Project Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes: As noted earlier, the overarching goal of the RTR Teacher and School Leader Residency proposal is further refine, expand, and evaluate the impact of the innovative RTR Teacher and School Leader Residency on teacher retention and student outcomes in high-need schools across the state. See Appendix C for **logic models**.

Objective 1: Refine and implement an integrated teacher and school leader residency program for high-need schools.

Rationale: This objective aims to leverage the strengths and lessons learned from the existing Metro Richmond-based RTR Teacher and School Leader Residency to create a comprehensive residency model that prepares both teachers and school leaders together. Through this, the residency aims to enhance collaboration and mutual understanding between teachers and school leaders, ultimately leading to improved student outcomes. Based on what we have learned throughout the 14 years of the program as well as the needs of the partner districts, RTR will conduct the following activities.

Intentional Recruitment, Selection and Support. Over five years, 175 diverse, highly effective teachers and school leaders will be prepared for high-need schools in our partner LEAs. Our refined model will place school leader residents and teacher residents in the same schools. Numbers represent smaller cohorts to refine this new combined model. Additionally, a small cohort will enable VCU to carefully study the alignment of the online coursework with district-specific residency experiences.

Table 1. Number of Teachers and School Leaders Prepared By Year

Number of Residents	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Teacher Residents	15	20	20	25	25	105
School Leader Residents	12	14	14	15	15	70
Total	27	34	34	40	40	175

Resident Recruitment. VCU and our partner LEAs will work closely during Year 1 to determine optimum ways to identify teacher and school leader candidates. Diversity and equity will be foundational elements of our recruitment efforts. Since 2015 the percentage of RTR-TR residents of color in each cohort has been above 41%. We will continue this trend as we expand across the state. Our aim is to recruit a diverse pool of candidates, including those from underrepresented populations, who reflect the communities in which they will be teaching and leading.

Teacher Resident Recruitment. Partner LEAs will share with RTR the specific content areas in which they need teacher residents. A diverse pool of resident candidates, including recent four-year college graduates and mid-career professionals from outside of the field of education, will be recruited. We have three distinct pipelines to recruit candidates who possess

the qualities we are seeking for RTR: VCU and other universities, social media, and the community.

The VCU and Other Universities Pipeline. Current VCU students are recruited through engaging presentations called “classroom crashes” to individuals in various programs of study in the College of Humanities and Sciences, including math, science, English, and interdisciplinary studies. Current students in other nearby universities, such as Virginia Union University (VUU) are directly recruited as well. Our recruitment coordinator, a graduate of RTR, visits classrooms on both the VCU and VUU campus to talk about the RTR Teacher Residency program. We also focus on increasing our visibility on websites of student organizations in all Virginia institutions of higher education.

The Social Media Pipeline. RTR has a vibrant social media presence that encompasses a website, a Facebook page, an Instagram page, a Twitter feed, and a LinkedIn account. We are developing more engaging content and have begun to enlist residents, graduates, and other stakeholders in the process of creating content for our social media platforms. We also utilize radio ads and have begun working with a media company to create online ads. We develop new content focused specifically on our partners and also reshare content our partners have created.

The Community-Based Pipeline. Based on an analysis of our past recruitment cycles, we focus intensely on cultivating a strong pipeline of local talent for schools in communities we serve. This process began with Cohort 4 (2014-2015) in RPS when we targeted those community groups already in the schools including AmeriCorps and Literacy Lab volunteers, substitutes, and paraprofessionals, holding tailored informational meetings for these groups. The importance of our community-based focus is affirmed by research studies that indicate that 60% of teachers teach within 15 miles of where they grew up and 85% percent are teaching within a

40- mile radius of where they grew up; for urban teachers the figure is even higher at 88% (Boyd et al., 2005; Reininger, 2012). This focus will continue as RTR expands across the state of Virginia. This local connection will help ensure that these talented teacher candidates remain in our communities after their three-year service agreement.

School Leader Resident Recruitment. School leader residents will be recruited from within the current LEA workforce; LEA personnel holding a master's degree with three or more years of teaching experience (requirements for admission into the graduate program), will be recruited. In our Metro Richmond school district partnerships, we have the advantage of recruiting from our large pool of RTR Alumni and NTC-Trained mentors, individuals with significant leadership potential. In a 2024 survey, hiring principals noted that RTR alumni were more effective than other teachers with comparable experience and shared they were taking on leadership roles, such as department or grade level chair, early in their careers. RTR mentor teachers are leaders within their buildings and have passed a rigorous screening process. Additionally, many RTR-TR mentors have served in the role for multiple years. Both alumni and mentors know the residency and NTC models; alumni have received NTC instructional coaching and mentoring, and mentors have delivered the model through an evidenced-based portfolio. As our partnerships with our expansion LEAs grow and develop over time, we will have this same ready-made pool of potential candidates as we do with our Metro Richmond partnerships.

Our recruitment plan also leverages two additional teacher leader pipelines that VCU has successfully cultivated: (1) A cadre of more than 1,000 Clinical Faculty (CF) with demonstrated proficiency in an abbreviated version of the NTC model, and (2) a pool of over 700 National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT), who have a track record of success in analyzing their classroom practice, using their findings to inform instructional decisions to improving learning,

especially among low-income students (Goldhaber & Anthony, 2004). While we will not limit our recruitment to RTR-TR Alumni, mentors, CF or NBCTs, these outstanding teacher leaders will provide a rich candidate pool in the Metro Richmond area and beyond in alignment with the best practices of the *New Leaders* Emerging Leaders Program. *New Leaders* targets teacher leaders with adult leadership and data-driven instructional skills to improve candidate selection (Gates et al., 2014).

Resident Stipends. Financial incentives will make our residency program more attractive to program applicants of a broad socio-economic spectrum. Teacher and school leader residents will be invited to apply for a stipend to help off-set their living expenses as they participate in the year-long residency program. Teacher residents may receive a living stipend of [REDACTED]. School leader residents may receive a [REDACTED] summer living stipend in addition to a salary and benefits provided by their school district while they serve as a resident, both of which are recognized best practices (Gates et al., 2014). Because many teachers must work second or third jobs, especially in the summer, the summer living stipend will allow SLRs to concentrate on the professional development experiences planned for the first summer of the program. In exchange for the stipend they receive, residents will sign in the presence of a notary an agreement to serve. The agreement to serve details the expectation that the resident will commit to the LEA for three years of full-time employment upon graduation from the program, will complete all licensure requirements, will provide employment documentation, and will be required to repay the stipend should they not fulfill the terms and conditions of the agreement. All repayment dollars will be used to carry out additional grant activities. See Appendix H.1 and H.2 for service agreements.

Resident Selection. RTR applicants are evaluated through a rigorous selection process. All accepted candidates must complete the VCU graduate school application and the RTR

application and selection processes that have been developed in collaboration with SOE faculty to ensure that accepted residents demonstrate the qualities required for admission into graduate-level studies at VCU. In establishing selection criteria, faculty and LEA partners focused on a holistic, equity-minded admissions process. “A holistic review emphasizes and ensures no single factor leads to accepting or excluding a candidate from program admission” (Boske et al., 2018, p. 6). More importantly, one of the key elements to this process includes the recognition of a candidate’s strengths and the extent a candidate’s strengths may offset possible challenges (Hardigan et al., 2001). “The holistic review process places the candidate’s academic skills and achievements within a wider school-community context and examines the effect the candidate may have in not only completing the degree program, but contributing to the community-at-large as a school leader” (Boske et al., 2018, p. 7).

Teacher Resident Selection. Candidates are accepted into RTR-TR based on an academic major, a 3.0 GPA, a written application, and the completion of a rigorous selection process that includes (1) teaching a mini-lesson; (2) a personal interview conducted by both VCU and school district representatives; and (3) submission of a writing sample detailing their experience with and passion for working with students in a high-need setting, why RTR is a good fit for them, and how they believe they can balance the demands of the residency program and their VCU coursework. Our selection process takes place virtually, a change that came about during the pandemic. The movement to the virtual environment has been well received by our Metro Richmond school district partners, as they are able to participate in selection activities from their own office. Having an online selection process in place will enable us to immediately begin the selection process in our expansion districts.

RTR-TR's rigorous selection process ensures that its residents are outstanding, highly-qualified individuals who have the dispositions necessary to be effective teachers in high-need schools. By including school district representatives in all aspects of the selection process assessments, RTR also ensures that residents will be a good fit for their high-need schools before they are invited to become a part of the program. The involvement of school district representatives reduces the risk that limited resources will be spent on preparing teacher candidates who may leave as soon as their service commitment is over. Additionally, school district partners determine the critical shortage areas they need those residents to fill. Recruiting qualified candidates who desire to teach in the school districts' critical shortage areas is key to the success of the partnerships. As we expand across the state, we anticipate a heightened need for math, science, elementary, and special education teachers as we have experienced in our Metro Richmond partnerships.

School Leader Resident Selection. Similar to the selection process for teacher residents, school leader candidates participate in a rigorous selection process that was developed in partnership with LEAs using the research-based *New Leaders* criteria that candidates: (1) Believe that all students are capable of achieving college success; (2) Demonstrate a relentless drive to achieve results; (3) Demonstrate strong adult leadership; (4) Focus on student-achievement results; (5) Work to personally improve oneself; (6) Demonstrate strong project-management skills; and (7) Demonstrate interpersonal leadership (Gates et al., 2014, p. 21). Candidates complete a written application, upload a statement of intent describing their career goals and evidence of their effectiveness as an educator, and submit letters of recommendation from their building principal, a colleague, and a third professional reference. As with teacher resident

candidates, RTR-SLR candidates participate in a virtual interview conducted by VCU and school district representatives.

School Leader Mentor Recruitment and Selection. Literature repeatedly suggests that site selection and mentorship pairing and training are critical to the ultimate experiential learning outcomes of the internship (Reyes-Guerra & Barnett, 2016). In addition to the on-site mentor, external leadership coaches have been utilized by exemplary preparation programs (Fusarelli et al., 2019) to provide additional guidance to aspiring leaders as they develop the practical skills and political acumen needed to navigate the complex work in educational leadership (Ryan, 2010). School leaders need to be adept at navigating the political climate and extreme resistance when promoting socially just changes (Ryan & Tuters, 2017). Suggestively, engaging in a shared reflective process of journaling between the resident and coach has helped promote the learning process throughout the residency year (Drake et al., 2021). For these reasons, RTR-SLR will work closely with partner LEAs to identify and recruit potential school leader mentors from the district's pool of high-need school principals. Criteria for selecting school leader mentors align with the *New Leaders'* emphasis on adult leadership skills, particularly in mentor selection (Gates et al., 2014). Mentor indicators include distributed leadership capabilities, teacher retention rates, school climate, and family and community partnerships.

Teacher Mentor Recruitment and Selection. Our long history of preparing teacher and school leader residents has shown that placing multiple residents in the same school has a positive impact on their experience; creating a school-based cohort of resident and mentor pairs within the larger cohort of program participants provides residents and mentors with an on-site support network, which can help them navigate the requirements of the program. As such, once the school leader mentors are selected, they will be asked to help RTR recruit teacher mentors from

school staff. Teacher mentors must be fully licensed in the content area and have a minimum of three years of teaching experience. Additionally, when recommending potential teacher mentors, school leaders are asked to consider the following qualities: (1) appropriate planning and preparation for instruction to improve student learning; (2) engagement of students with various learning preferences; (3) collaboration with colleagues for instructional growth; (4) data-driven decision making.

Teacher mentor candidates are selected through a careful screening process that includes: (1) a written application with recommendations from administrators; (2) evidence of student learning gains and collaboration with colleagues to improve instruction; (3) strong content knowledge and pedagogical skills, including the ability to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of students with different learning preferences; (4) use of formative and diagnostic assessments to improve student learning; (5) submission of a 20- to 30-minute teaching video; and (6) a virtual interview containing post-video observation debriefing and scenario-based questions to determine the extent to which the teacher is a reflective practitioner. Once teacher mentor candidates are selected, they are added to the pool of potential mentors. Teacher residents and mentor teachers complete a matching survey, which includes a personality inventory. Information gathered through this survey process is used to pair residents and mentors. Our 14 years of pairing residents and mentors has shown that mentor teachers need to have buy-in and truly want to serve as a mentor; additionally, creating the best matches between residents and mentors based on personality and work style leads to a more successful residency year.

Mentor Preparation. School leader and teacher mentors, along with the school leader residents, participate in 4 full days of New Teacher Center (NTC) coaching and mentoring training prior to the start of the school year. Throughout the year, mentors receive ongoing training and support

by participating in monthly professional learning forums. These forums are designed to: (1) continue to strengthen mentor/coaching skills learned during the formal NTC training; (2) reinforce and calibrate the use of NTC formative assessment tools and mentor protocols through ongoing examination of these artifacts of mentor/coaching practice; (3) provide a supportive environment where mentors can discuss the challenges they face in working with residents and engage in problem-posing/problem-solving activities; (4) identify additional training needs; and (5) provide time for reflection and practice in refining coaching skills. Teacher mentors are released to work with their residents one period per day; teacher and school leader mentors are provided a [REDACTED] stipend to compensate them for summer training and the additional work they undertake in their role as mentors. Mentors may be relieved of teaching duties as a result of taking on the additional responsibilities of mentoring.

Resident - Mentor Support. A lesson learned in VCU's first TQP grant was the importance of supporting and *mentoring the mentors* in peer-to-peer exchanges as they learn the new skill of mentoring. Therefore, residency coordinators provide coaching support for teacher and school leader mentors, as well as the leadership teams who work with school leader mentors, throughout the residency year. Residency coordinators who oversee the teacher resident-mentor and school leader resident-mentor pairs have experience as classroom teachers or building principals, respectively. The residency coordinators: (1) have a thorough understanding of the NTC tools and processes; (2) facilitate the monthly professional learning forums for mentors; (3) monitor the effectiveness of mentors with on-site visits; (4) provide feedback on the use of NTC tools and submitted artifacts; and (5) ensure the needs of the residents are being met by the mentors, stepping in as needed to support the residents.

Curriculum. A key feature of this proposal is the refinement of the VCU SOE curriculum, which will not only enable the RTR Teacher and School Leader Residency to expand beyond the Metro Richmond region, but will also be more connected to the residency experience. All teacher and school leader residents will complete a graduate-level program of study. SOE faculty will develop online courses in each of the programs and will work with RTR staff to ensure that the activities and assignments in each of the courses align with the year-long residency experience.

Teacher Residency Curriculum. The SOE departments of Teaching and Learning and Counseling and Special Education provide the programs of study for the teacher residents. Programs include: (1) Master of Teaching (M.T.), with concentrations in elementary education, secondary English, secondary math, secondary science, and secondary social studies; (2) Master of Education (M.Ed.) in Special Education; and (3) Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction. The M.T. secondary education programs are designed for individuals with an undergraduate degree in the content area. Given that we will be recruiting mid-career professionals from the communities we serve, potential candidates may not qualify for the M.T. program. SOE faculty have begun developing an alternative graduate-level program for these individuals; the M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction is being designed to provide all of the professional studies teacher licensure requirements as well as content-specific methods courses. To demonstrate that they possess strong content knowledge, teacher residents in the secondary education M.T. and M.Ed. programs will be required to submit a passing score from the Praxis content exam. Teacher residents enrolling in the M.T. in elementary education or the M.Ed. in special education may have a bachelor's degree in any content area; however, they are also required to meet all of the teacher licensure requirements, including licensure exams. See Appendix H.3 for details about the graduate-level coursework.

Teacher residents also participate in monthly seminars designed to further connect their coursework and residency experience. During these seminars, residents address problems of practice and share how their residency observations and experiences align with the theory and best practices they are learning through their VCU coursework. One example of professional learning in which teacher residents will engage during seminar is the Virginia Department of Education's IEP modules; completing these modules and participating in a discussion about what they have learned will enable all teacher residents to be prepared to meet the needs of diverse learners. While all of the coursework and seminars will be provided virtually through this expansion effort, we plan to explore the idea of developing regional hubs to provide some in-person coursework and/or professional learning for the teacher residents. See Table 2 (p. 32) for an overview of the teacher residency components.

School Leader Residency Curriculum. The Educational Leadership Department's mission is "to prepare visionary scholars and leaders who promote equity, inclusiveness, and justice across a variety of spheres." The 13-month curriculum builds upon the rigorous content of the 21-credit traditional Post-Master's Certificate (PMC) in Educational Leadership to further address the department's mission. Our current program focuses on the PMC; however, because many aspiring school leaders do not currently hold a master's degree, and all of the courses in the PMC are also required for the Master's degree in School Administration and Supervision, we are beginning conversations with SOE faculty to determine if we can offer the Master's degree program to school leader residents who do not hold a master's degree. Doing so would create an opportunity to participate in the program for a wider, more diverse pool of candidates.

The traditional program adheres to the quality features of leadership preparation programs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010) with (1) curriculum and course content based on the

National Educational Leadership Preparation Program (NELP) Standards (2018) (see Appendix H.4); (2) instructional approaches that use case studies to engage students in problem-based learning and the development of educational intervention plans; (3) internships that begin the first semester of the program and run concurrent with coursework; (4) candidate support from program-dedicated faculty advisors and staff with school and district leadership experience; and (5) use of a clinical observation model for a focus on instructional leadership. Students engage in courses in six key areas (see Table 3 on p. 33 and Appendix H.5) and in each course are expected to explore the overarching cultural, demographic, political and economic engines that drive segregation and inequity in schools and communities.

The program uses key assessments that include: a plan of action to support student learning for an identified group of students; an action researched-based, educational intervention plan; an on-site supervisor instrument, administered multiple times for both self-assessment, peer-feedback, and for supervisory formative and summative purposes; and the School Leaders Licensure Assessment (Latham & Perlman, 1999). Organizational supports include a fully online delivery model to provide full-time education professionals with greater autonomy and flexibility in their learning.

Core competencies for School Leader Residencies were developed; these competencies overlap with the aspirational skill sets, competencies and dispositions in the *Profile of a Virginia Leader* identified by K-12 stakeholders for the Virginia Board of Education. The competencies also map to the NELP standards used in the traditional program. Core components of the differentiated coursework will be pre-residency training in use of the NTC instructional coaching and mentoring model and the job-embedded, year-long residency.

As with teacher residents, school leader residents participate in monthly seminars, which integrate the theory and instructional strategies learned in coursework with the reality of high-need schools. The seminars are designed to address challenges specific to high-need schools, using evidence-based practices, and are an opportunity to present problems of practice and develop professional learning communities. RTR contracts with various organizations, including Noble Story Group, Alliance for Unitive Justice, Greater Richmond Stop Child Abuse Now, and the VCU School of Social Work, to deliver professional learning content during the monthly seminars. Collaborating with these outside organizations helps ensure that all participants have the opportunity to be exposed to practical applications of corresponding content to add to their leadership toolbox.

Clinical Experiences. Teacher and school leader residents complete a year-long residency experience in a high-need school. The aim of this clinical experience is to fully prepare them to become teachers and school leaders of record in high-need schools immediately following graduation from the program.

Supported Teacher Residency. Teacher residents spend the school year learning alongside the mentor, gradually taking on more responsibility as the year progresses. RTR residency coordinators have developed a gradual release calendar (see Appendix H.6), aligning the NTC tools and feedback forms with the resident's teaching responsibilities. The year begins with a co-teaching model in which the resident assists with teaching, but the mentor remains fully in the lead position. Later in the fall and into the winter, the resident takes on more lead teaching responsibilities. In the elementary classroom, the resident will lead one unit (e.g., a science unit on the water cycle), then two units, and so on until the resident becomes the solo teacher from January through April; in the secondary classroom, the resident gradually takes on a

greater number of class periods, culminating in solo teaching from January through April. The solo teaching time is a more in-depth student teaching experience that is part of traditional teacher preparation programs. Unlike traditional student teaching, teacher residents do not have to try to develop relationships with the students while simultaneously beginning their solo teaching, as they have gotten to know the students over the first half of the school year. After solo teaching is complete, the resident and mentor co-plan and co-teach for the remainder of the school year.

Throughout the residency year, the teacher resident is supported by RTR residency coordinators. As previously discussed, residency coordinators oversee the mentor-resident relationship by monitoring the effectiveness of the mentor and ensuring that the resident's needs are being met. They hold monthly meetings with the pair, visit the mentor's classroom multiple times throughout the year, and provide feedback on all submitted artifacts, including NTC tools and resident logs of residency activities. This level of support allows the residency coordinators to modify the gradual release plan as needed and ensures that teacher residents are able to successfully complete the program.

As VCU students, teacher residents are evaluated on the clinical continuum. This evaluation is completed at the beginning, middle, and end of the residency year and monitors resident growth across six standards: (1) Creating and maintaining a positive and safe learning environment; (2) Planning for instruction; (3) Engaging and supporting students in learning; (4) Assessing student learning; (5) Developing as a professional; and (6) Advocating for social justice and equity and developing family and community relationships. Each standard contains key elements (see Appendix H.7), and residents are instructed in developing SMART goals

aligned with the key elements. Residents are evaluated on the continuum by the mentor, the resident themselves, and the residency coordinator.

Supported Job-embedded School Leader Residency. The major difference between the traditional course of study and RTR School Leader Residency is the clinical experience. Unlike the traditional approach in which students have periodic, short-term internships, RTR-SLR has created a supported job-embedded year-long residency experience. The residency offers a more in-depth and richer experience as residents engage in authentic leadership activities coupled with multiple opportunities for formative and informal feedback, reinforcing the pragmatic value of critical reflection and support. Focus groups conducted as part of prior RTR evaluations consistently found that some of the most important learning happens through rich, impromptu conversations about problems of practice, experiences which leaders can draw upon to cultivate a culture of continuous improvement. The unique opportunity for the school leader resident to view school-wide policy decisions through both the [resident] and the administrator lens is a structure that broadens the perspective of both the leadership team and the resident (J. Walker, personal interview, November 7, 2018).

Residents will have a team of people supporting their growth as a school leader. This team, led by the mentor, will work together to implement a gradual release calendar of responsibilities (See Appendix H.8). The RTR-SLR training model provides ongoing opportunities for residents to integrate theory and practice as they learn how to lead. During these opportunities, mentors will formatively assess residents' progress. However, unlike a traditional intern experience, residents move in and out of responsibility for all aspects of leading to provide a more sustained opportunity to reflect on their practice. Additionally, each month throughout the fall, the mentor provides the resident with a variety of experiences and support to

further the development of skills and dispositions. As with teacher residents, in the spring, residents gradually assume more responsibilities and develop SMART goals aligned to the leadership competencies. By the end of the residency year, residents will have experience in all aspects of school leadership.

RTR-SLR provides residents with deeper knowledge of traditional and context-targeted topics, which are anchored to instructional leadership and culturally responsive and equitable school leadership, and provides ongoing formative feedback from school leader mentors to adapt and adjust their behavior. Furthermore, the program adds a monthly seminar to the coursework. These components are not currently part of the traditional PMC program; incorporating them into the residency program will ensure that school leader residents are fully prepared to serve in high-need schools.

Post-Residency Support. Once residents complete their residency year, graduates continue to receive ongoing support and professional learning opportunities. Teacher residency graduates participate in a program developed by RTR titled Navigating the Life of a Real Teacher. This program was created in response to feedback from RTR-TR graduates who shared frustrations that they faced even after the year-long preparation. Navigating the Life includes a panel of alums who share their experiences transitioning from resident to teacher as well as presentations and displays by various teacher and student support groups. Teachers are also paired with a New Teacher Coach, an individual who has received NTC training and participates in the monthly forums, that works with them weekly in their first year and bi-weekly in their second year. School districts also assign each first year teacher an in-building mentor to provide support as they begin their teaching career. Likewise, school leader residency graduates also receive ongoing support. They are paired with a Career Coach, an individual who has received NTC

training and participates in the monthly forums, who works with them at least one hour per week through their first two years as a school leader. Training veteran teachers and leaders as Mentors and New Teacher/Career Coaches not only enhances the skills of exemplary residents and graduates, but also provides meaningful leadership roles that will lead to increased retention of the districts' most outstanding leaders.

The positive impact of peer networks on retention (Gates et al., 2014; 2019) and on instruction are well documented, (Bryk et al., 1999; Louis & Kruse, 1995; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001; Talbert et al., 2008) and residents expect and depend upon this type of support to continue to develop in their roles as teachers and leaders. The RTR Teacher Alumni Network meets monthly to share resources, discuss district-wide policy changes that impact teaching and learning, and identify common issues they wish to act on to improve student outcomes. As RTR expands across the state, changes to the meeting format and location will be explored so all alumni across the state can continue to receive the support of the professional network. Throughout this expansion, a School Leader Support Network will also be developed that will include school leader graduates and current school leaders who support RTR teacher and school leader residents and graduates.

Table 2. Teacher Residency Overview

Teacher Residency Overview	
Master of Teaching / Master of Education	
Residency Length	13 months (May - June)
RTR Teacher Residency Values	RTR Teacher Residency Graduates will uphold the RTR values (adapted from Leading Educators) Equity - We challenge educational inequity. We work toward a more just society. Service - We listen to and prioritize the needs of others. We put students first. Community - We support, challenge, and celebrate each other. We build a collective movement. Growth - We develop ourselves and others. We make our best better. Results - We work hard and purposefully to reach results. When there is no wind, we row.
Gradual Release Timeline and Assessment	August and September - Co-teaching; Mentor is lead October - Co-teaching; Mentor is lead; Lead teach 1 unit/class period November - Co-teaching; Mentor is lead; Solo teach 1-2 units/class periods December - Co-teaching; Mentor is lead; Solo teach 1-2 units/a whole week unit January, February, and March - Solo teaching; Resident is lead solo teacher

	<p>April - Co-teaching; Resident is lead</p> <p>May and June - Co-teaching; Resident and Mentor co-plan and co-teach</p> <p>Residents are evaluated on the 6 standards of the VCU Clinical Continuum at three timepoints (beginning, middle, and end of year). Ratings are completed by the Resident, Mentor, and Residency Coordinator.</p>	
Structure of Residency Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residency: 4 days per week in residency school, gradual increase in responsibilities, 8- to 10-week solo teaching period VCU Coursework: 3 semesters; 33 to 37 credits 	
	Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RTR Onboarding Mentor Match and Placement <p>VCU Program Orientation</p> <p>Coursework (varies by program)</p>
	Fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residency Resident seminars Mentor forums <p>Coursework (varies by program)</p> <p>Seminars</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural Responsiveness ELL Strategies
	Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residency Resident seminars Mentor forums <p>Coursework (varies by program)</p> <p>Seminars</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IEPs District HR Presentations
Post-Residency Support	<p>New teacher induction through RTR's Navigating the Life of a Real Teacher professional learning opportunity; Participation in the RTR Alumni Network Professional Learning Opportunities; Support for at least an hour a week from an NTC-trained New Teacher Coach during the first year of teaching, and at least an hour every other week during the second year of teaching; and an in-school Mentor provided by their school district.</p>	
Virginia Teacher Licensure Requirements	<p>Praxis exam(s) for the content/level; Virginia Department of Education modules; First Aid and CPR certification; Completion of professional studies courses (classroom management, assessment, curriculum and instruction, human development, foundations, and language and literacy); and the Clinical experience</p>	
Degree Earned	<p>Master of Teaching or Master of Education.</p>	
Incentives for Residents	<p>██████ resident living stipend.</p>	
Service Commitment	<p>At least 3 years in a high-need school in the residency school district.</p>	

Table 3. School Leader Residency Overview

School Leader Residency Overview Post-master's Certificate in Educational Leadership	
Residency Length	13 months (August - August)
RTR School Leader Residency Competencies	<p>School Leader Residency Graduates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are equipped with the capacity to improve and sustain improvement in hard-to-staff schools (NELP Standards 1 and 7) Apply theory to practice with the ability to trouble-shoot, learn, and adapt (NELP Standard 6) Use multiple sources of data to support continuous improvement, inclusive school cultures and inform instructional and operational decision making (NELP Standards 1, 3.1, 4, 6)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balance system-level accountability with school-level support (NELP Standard 7) Improve student achievement (NELP Standard 4) Coach, mentor and model effective practices that improve teaching and learning (NELP Standard 4) Foster a collaborative, systems-focused, culture of continuous improvement (NELP Standards 1 and 7) Create learner centered school cultures that develop the potential and address the needs of students from underserved communities (NELP Standard 5) Build trust and develop clearly communicated, open processes for faculty, staff and parents to identify problems and contribute to school-based solutions (NELP Standard 2 and 5) Build upon the cultural wealth of all students and families and value and leverage diversity, equity and inclusion (NELP Standard 3) 		
Assessment of SLRs	The Design Team will incorporate the above competencies into the requirements of the portfolio used in the traditional program. SLRs will produce multiple pieces of evidence that demonstrate clear, consistent, and convincing evidence of mastery in each of the competencies. This portfolio and a video of a post-observation conversation between the SLR and a classroom teacher, will be submitted at the end of the 3 rd semester, prior to the SLRs graduation from the program.		
Structure of Job-Embedded Residency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residency: 5 days a week in host school, part of the day job responsibilities, part of the day as a SLR; 3 credits total VCU Coursework: 3 semesters; 2 courses per semester, 18 credits total 		
	Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Onboarding Professional Learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentor Match and Placement Program orientation
	Fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residency Resident seminars Mentor forums 	Coursework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Law Multiple Dimensions of Leadership Seminars <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NTC SCAN / School of Social Work
	Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residency Resident seminars Mentor forums 	Coursework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human Resource & Fiscal Management Enhancing & Supporting Instruction Seminars <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NTC Noble Story Group
	Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resident seminars 	Coursework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership for Individualized Learning Leadership for Educational Change & Improvement SLRs submit final Portfolio Seminars <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alliance for Unitive Justice
Post-Residency Support	SLR receives support for at least an hour a week from an NTC-trained Career Coach during their first two years after their residency year. They will also join the School Leader Support Network with professional learning and mentoring support from peers and coaches.		
Virginia Certification Minimal Requirements	Master's degree from a regionally accredited college or university; the degree must be in the field of education or in one that meets the requirements to be employed in a position requiring licensure in Virginia. Applicants must have an active renewable educator license		

	and have at least two years of experience in an instructional personnel position that requires Virginia licensure.
Degree Earned	Post-master's Certificate in Educational Leadership
Incentives for Residents	██████ resident stipend. In addition, residents receive full-time salary and benefits from the school district during the academic school year.
Service Commitment	At least 3 years in a high-need school in the residency school district.

Outcomes: Highly effective teachers and school leaders who remain in high-need schools and are better prepared to improve student outcomes.

Objective 2. Strengthen the instructional leadership capacity of school leader residents and leadership mentors while enhancing the instructional practices of teacher residents.

Rationale: Instructional leadership is a core component of school leadership, and yet we still see that aspiring school leaders completing a traditional internship “continue to be frustrated by devoting the majority of their time to managerial tasks and supervising student discipline” (Reyes-Guerra & Barnett, 2016, p. 240). By aligning the training and development of school leaders with that of teachers, this objective seeks to create a cohesive learning environment where school leaders are equipped to effectively support and guide teachers in implementing best instructional practices.

Coaching and Mentoring Training. School leader residents will use the evidence-based NTC instructional coaching model whose focus is on the knowledge, skills, and understanding critical to improving instruction with beginning and veteran teachers (Glazerman et al., 2010). This program offers multiple benefits for the SLRs. As noted earlier, a randomized controlled study, meeting WWC standards (version 3.0) without reservations, supports the model’s positive effect on student achievement (Glazerman et al., 2010). Second, VCU has almost 20 years using this model. In 2004, VCU received a TQE-P grant from the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) to implement the NTC mentoring model in the highest-need, hard-to-staff schools in the Metro Richmond area. Work with the model expanded in 2010 with a TQP grant, as RTR adapted this model for use with the RTR preservice teacher preparation and has been using it successfully for

a decade with residents. Consistent with Glazerman et al. (2010), recent RTR evaluation findings show an impact on student achievement as described on page 9.

In addition, as previously stated, the VCU Center for Teacher Leadership (CTL) which oversees RTR completed the rigorous process of becoming licensed to conduct the NTC training for Virginia through a 2006 State Council of Higher Education in Virginia grant. Therefore, NTC training can be conducted in-house at a considerable cost savings for this project. The school leader residents, mentors, and career coaches will be trained in the NTC coaching and mentoring model to observe and provide feedback to teachers in their buildings, including teacher residents, while receiving continued support to embed the model into their leadership practice. In addition, school leaders who host RTR teacher residents or hire RTR graduates will be included in this training so that they can more effectively support residents and other teachers in their schools. Use of the NTC model builds coherence within the partner school districts, as the career coaches who support RTR graduates also use these NTC tools.

SOE Faculty Involvement. SOE faculty teaching the courses RTR teacher residents take have had opportunities to observe the residents in their school placements. As we expand beyond the Metro Richmond region and strengthen the alignment between coursework and instructional practice, further opportunities will be created for faculty to travel to all of our partner districts, meet with teacher and school leader residents and mentors, and observe the instructional practices of the residents. Faculty will then be able to add or modify their VCU coursework to address gaps in teacher resident instructional practices or to address school district specific needs. Additionally, opportunities for school leader residents, mentors, and faculty to collaborate will be created. Through these collaborative sessions, faculty will hear from in-service and aspiring school leaders what they see as important aspects of instructional development for

teachers working in high-need schools. Faculty will then be able to take these field-based needs and combine them with research-based best practices as they prepare future courses and professional learning opportunities for preservice and in-service teachers. These professional learning opportunities can include topics such as literacy instruction, math instruction, and science instruction.

Outcomes: Improved instructional leadership practices of school leader graduates, leadership mentors, and educational leaders, as well as a culture of excellence and continuous improvement to support the instruction of teachers in high-need schools served by RTR.

Objective 3: Promote a collaborative culture of continuous improvement that supports the social, emotional, and academic needs of students.

Rationale: This objective focuses on equipping both school leaders and teachers with the skills needed to create a supportive and inclusive school culture. Emphasis will be placed on developing strategies that address the comprehensive needs of the students, which is of particular importance in the high-need school setting, especially in a post-COVID context. Objective 3 also addresses **Competitive Preference Priority 3—Meeting Students’ Social, Emotional, and Academic Needs**. Teachers and leaders need additional skills that the two WWC evidence-based project components (job-embedded residency and NTC models) are not explicitly designed to address. These skills are addressed in two of the nine school leader residency competencies: building trust and open communication for faculty, staff, and students; and building on the cultural wealth of all students and families and valuing and leveraging diversity, equity and inclusion. To build these competencies school leader residents and their mentors will be trained in the use of restorative practices to both support students social emotional learning¹ (SEL) and

¹ Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

to improve school climate by building relational trust among leadership and staff. Restorative practices (RP) are increasingly used in school and district-wide initiatives to address youth behavior and improve school climate (Schiff, 2018). Including RP differentiates our curriculum for our partner LEAs' context, and it recognizes the growing emphasis on the need for leaders to support students' non-cognitive skills and build relational trust with teachers. *Restorative Justice for School Culture Change* training will occur during the ongoing TR and SLR seminars as well as the mentor forums.

Restorative Practices to Support Students SEL. There is growing empirical evidence that school-based support for students' SEL promotes positive behavioral, academic, and mental health outcomes for youth (Taylor et al., 2017). Leaders need practical tools for creating a school climate that supports students SEL (Greenberg et al., 2003; Zins et al., 2007) and yet SEL interventions are often limited to improving specific risk factors (e.g. drug and alcohol prevention) when they could provide a more comprehensive approach to alter these behaviors (Acosta et al., 2019). Deficit-oriented approaches used to alter student behavior (e.g. zero tolerance) have failed to help students develop the relationships they need to thrive, and have led to multiple unintended consequences, such as an increase in dropout rates, anxiety, depression, and academic failure, particularly among minorities (Ashworth et al., 2008), and yet these punitive discipline practices persist, particularly in high-need, majority-minority schools (Payne & Welsh, 2015).

Restorative practices offer a comprehensive and alternative approach for supporting SEL through a continuum of practices that range from informal, e.g., using "I" statements to communicate feelings, to formal, e.g., circle practices to uncover root causes of behavior, practice reflective listening, and form emotional bonds. This model provides students with an

opportunity to openly deal with underlying causes of violence, to explicitly acknowledge issues pertaining to sociocultural differences, such as racism and discrimination (Bickmore & Parker, 2014; Parker, 2016), and to be inclusive, participatory citizens (Avery & Hahn, 2004; Evans & Vaandering, 2016; Llewelyn & Parker, 2018; Torney-Purta et al., 2001). Mounting evidence suggests that RP can help decrease suspensions, expulsions, and juvenile justice system entry; increase student engagement; and improve school climate.

Restorative Practices to Improve School Climate by Building Relational Trust. There is increasing recognition that to fully realize the outcomes of RP, they must be part of school climate change (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020, Payne & Welsh, 2015, McCluskey, 2018). As research reveals the connections between adult leadership skills- the skills needed to get adults to buy into proposed changes- and student achievement (Burkhauser et al., 2012; Gates et al., 2014), RPs can be a way to improve school environments through stronger bonds and relational trust among leadership and staff. Bryk and Schneider (2002) find that strong relational trust is a key to collective decision-making and buy-in, ultimately a core resource for school improvement. When relational trust is strong, faculty and staff are more likely to be deeply engaged in initiatives as opposed to exercising strategic compliance or even resistance, and the work of school improvement becomes a shared value. Relational trust essentially reduces the risk associated with change and creates a safe environment to learn and grow together. Because the majority of faculty and staff work is defined, to varying extents, by school-level policies, or district-level policies interpreted and implemented at the school-level, school leaders can be a key lever for change when they build trusting relationships and communicate in ways that leads to understanding and support for the policies (Santoro, 2018; Senechal et al., 2016). RP training will not only help all RTR residents understand how to develop relational trust with their

students but will also provide SLRs with the skills needed to build trust with the teachers and teacher residents in their buildings.

Objective 2 describes how school leader residents will be equipped with the NTC tools to conduct authentic forms of instructional observations in their schools that promote professional reflection and growth and shift away from systems of accountability that are primarily based on reporting and compliance. School leader residents/graduates will share the specific observation data collected through the NTC model with teachers and teacher residents in their building; these teachers will then be able to exercise professional judgment and alter their instructional practices. Adding RP to these strong instructional leadership practices builds a foundation of relational trust.

Restorative Practices Training. We will partner with the Alliance for Unitive Justice (AUJ) to lead the RP training for school leader residents and mentors. The strengths of this partnership include concrete theory and practical strategies that support school culture change for both students and staff, and a record of success with implementing these practices at Armstrong High School in RPS (Ortega et al., 2016). While the Armstrong program was not a whole school program, the school reported in the program's 2nd year the lowest number of student offenders (185) in any year between 2008 and 2018. Comparatively, in 2018 Armstrong reported 461 student offenders (VDOE, Safe Schools Information Resource, Offense Frequency Reports). In addition, AUJ has been leading RP workshops through VCU for RPS and other LEAs since 2015. See Appendix H.9 for a table comparing how AUJ's core principles align with the empirical evidence of SEL intervention enhanced competencies, creating the shift from a punishment-driven, compliance-oriented school culture to a collaborative culture of continuous improvement.

Trauma-Informed Practices. There is a growing body of evidence that trauma-informed practices in schools are needed to meet the needs of children who have experienced adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) (Avery, et al. 2020). ACEs are childhood traumas, occurring before the age of 18, that result in toxic stress, which can lead to long-term health problems and academic and behavioral issues. Research has found that Blacks and Hispanics had higher risk of child maltreatment, chiefly witnessing domestic violence (Roberts et al., 2011). ACEs are common among Virginians. 61% of adults have experienced at least one ACE. In the average Virginia classroom, 12 out of 20 children have experienced at least one ACE, and three of these students have experienced 4 or more ACEs. The most common ACEs Virginia adults experienced as youth are verbal abuse, divorce, and household substance misuse (Virginia Department of Social Services, 2020).

Greater Richmond SCAN (Stop Child Abuse Now) was founded in 1991 to prevent and treat child abuse and neglect in the City of Richmond and the surrounding counties that include soem of our partner districts. RTR will contract with both SCAN and VCU’s School of Social Work to develop professional learning opportunities for both teacher and school leader residents during their monthly seminars. Training topics include (but are not limited to): Introduction to Trauma Informed Practice, Trauma Informed Schools: Classroom Strategies, Managing the Impact of Trauma Exposure in the Classroom (vicarious trauma/secondary traumatic stress), Strategies for Wellness and Resilience in the Classroom, and insights into mental illness. This further strengthens the ability of teacher and school leader residents to meet the SEL needs of the students in high-need schools.

Emotional Leadership Training. In addition to RP training, RTR will provide emotional leadership training to school leader residents. Too often, leadership development focuses on

technical training alone that does not address the deeper personal obstacles that impact interactions with staff and students. Leaders who apply technical fixes to adaptive challenges—those that require a shift in the way we see ourselves and the world—will not make long term, sustainable impact (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). We will contract with Noble Story Group to create and deliver seminars that go beyond technical skills and develop the emotional intelligence of school leaders. The organization’s approach operationalizes the concepts of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management from Goleman’s (1995) work on emotional intelligence and centers around personal values. The modules will provide leaders with a road map for shifting the way they see themselves and their roles to address adaptive challenges and make sustainable impact.

Outcomes: Demonstrated relational trust, improved school climate and satisfaction, improved student engagement, and reduced student disciplinary actions.

Objective 4: Develop and implement a model for continuous professional growth and community engagement among school leaders and teachers.

Rationale: Community and family engagement in schools can positively impact student outcomes (Stefanski et al., 2016, Michael et al., 2023), however without training and support on best practices, engagement efforts may not positively influence student outcomes in high-need schools (Peck & Reitzug, 2018). Establishing a model for ongoing professional development and community involvement can encourage school leaders and teachers to engage with local communities and stakeholders, which can have lasting positive effects on the schools they serve.

Getting to Know the Community. While RTR intends to recruit residents from within the communities we serve, experience has shown that often individuals are interested in becoming teachers in an area in which they may not be familiar. To help teacher residents understand the current community context and the historical policies and events that continue to impact the

high-need schools in the community, we have collaborated with museums and local leaders to develop bus or walking tours for the residents. These tours help the residents gain an appreciation for and an understanding of the community. Residents are also able to develop a deeper understanding of the effect of historical events and policies that impact schools to this day. As we expand our program to new school districts across the state, we will establish relationships with local leaders and historians who can provide opportunities for residents, RTR staff, and VCU faculty to learn more about the school and community context.

Developing a Workshop Series. RTR staff will collaborate with VCU faculty who have research and practical experience and knowledge about community and family engagement to develop a workshop series in which teachers and school leaders may engage. The network of program alumni and mentors will be asked to provide examples of successful community engagement endeavors as well as questions or concerns they have on the topic. This data will help shape the focus and content of the workshop series. Over time, this program will evolve to meet the needs of the stakeholders.

Outcomes: Partnerships that enhance educational resources and opportunities, thereby enriching the learning environment for students.

Competitive Preference Priority 1—Increasing Educator Diversity. Recent research analyzing data from North Carolina and Tennessee found positive effects that could be tied to student-teacher race match that persisted over longer periods of time (Gershenson et al., 2017; Lindsay, 2021). For example, they found that having a Black teacher for one year in elementary school raised long-term educational attainment for Black male students, especially for those from low-income households. For the most disadvantaged Black males, Lindsay and the team estimated that exposure to a Black teacher in elementary school reduced high school dropout rates by 39% and raised college-going aspirations. RTR has a strong history of increasing the

number of diverse teachers we prepare. Residents of color were only 20% of our first cohort of residents in 2011. After analyzing the most effective recruitment practices, RTR began to focus more intensely on recruiting from the communities we serve and expanding pathways to become a resident. These changes have resulted in the doubling of the percentage of Black residents, increasing from 20% to over 40% each year since 2014.

In addition, RTR has been fortunate to receive a Black Educator Initiative (BEI) grant from the National Center for Teacher Residencies (NCTR) in April 2020, funding from the NCTR SEED grant to support teacher residents of color in 2022, and an August F. Hawkins Center for Excellence grant in 2023 to support diverse, multilingual teacher residents and program graduates. With this funding, we have established the Minority Educator Center (MEC) and have been able to provide teacher residents of color with funds to support licensure tests, professional learning, and emergency expenses. MEC provides a safe space for minority educators in the Richmond area—not just RTR residents—to receive the support, mentoring, advising, and resources they need to be successful. MEC serves as a place to understand these educators’ experiences and track the patterns and mobility through their preparation programs and careers so that we can improve the racial diversity of the teacher workforce. MEC is evidence of RTR’s impact on the entire SOE, our region, and state.

The percentage of RTR-TR residents of color far exceeds most traditional teacher preparation programs. In Virginia, approximately 13% of our teachers are underrepresented minorities. Nationally, 28% of those enrolled in teacher preparation programs were individuals of color (AACTE, 2022). With the support of BEI, SEED, and Hawkins grants, 47% of our teacher residency graduates identify as underrepresented minorities. To continue to increase our ability to recruit and prepare even more educators of color, RTR will partner with Virginia Union

University, one of Virginia's Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), to develop a pipeline of candidates for RTR Teacher and School Leader Residency that reflect the demographics of the student populations that we serve. In addition, there will be opportunities to collaborate on modules, speaker series, and ongoing training focused on equity that will be available to residents and others in the RTR network.

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Supporting a Diverse Educator Workforce and Professional Growth to Strengthen Student Learning and Competitive Preference Priority 4: Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities.

Research indicates that teaching and school leadership are the primary in-school factors that affect student learning (Özdemir et al., 2022). Therefore, access to highly skilled teachers and leaders is the most important resource that schools provide to students. By recruiting and preparing highly skilled, diverse teachers and school leaders who will bring a strong equity focus to their work in schools, we will ensure that students in the high-need schools that RTR serves will have the most important resource needed to support their learning—teachers and school leaders who show them what is possible, fight for equitable access to educational resources for their students, and create opportunities to achieve their dreams. The need for deliberate equity-oriented and culturally responsive leadership is critical not only to our understanding, and eventual dismantling, of systemic oppression in K-12 education, but also for a radical reimagining of access, opportunity, and possibilities for historically disadvantaged populations and the educators and institutions that support them (Khalifa et al., 2016, Leithwood, 2021). As our society becomes more racially and ethnically diverse, it is the responsibility of all educators and leaders to adapt their practices, attitudes, and dispositions to best educate students, both now and in the future. Additionally, education leaders at every level can benefit from becoming aware

of and comfortable with strategies that focus on culturally relevant pedagogy for both students and teachers. Equity-oriented teachers and school leaders engage in both reflective and deliberate practices to dismantle systems that disproportionately harm minoritized student and teacher populations.

While the current VCU graduate programs have educational equity and social justice content integrated throughout the courses, a more structured and sustained focus is needed. For this reason, RTR will create learning experiences that focus intensely on preparing and supporting teachers and leaders who will bring a strong equity lens to their work in schools—not only for residents, but also as part of the Teacher Alumni and School Leader Support Networks’ professional development offerings.

The deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and others significantly impacted the communities RTR serves and created a heightened focus on racial injustice and systemic racism. RTR was a leader in addressing issues of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) even before these tragic events. In January 2020, we contracted with Courageous Conversations to conduct their 2-day *Beyond Diversity* training for our staff and invited SOE and district leaders to join us. As a result, we committed to having all our residents and their mentor teachers participate in this powerful training. Because of COVID, we had to restrict this to a 2.5-hour virtual introduction to the *Beyond Diversity* training as part of our August 2020 Launch for Cohort 10. However, we continued to build on this important work during the 2020-2021 academic year by designing and conducting 3-hour required DEI forums for all residents one Saturday a month. Results from a survey that included Likert-scale and open-ended questions from 64% of Cohort 10 residents demonstrated the impact of the forums:

Table 4. Impact of DEI Forums

Before DEI Teaching Forums	After DEI Teaching Forums
On average, residents reported not feeling equipped to (1) identify examples of systemic racism; (2) challenge manifestations of racism and other forms of oppression in education; (3) understand the relationship between practitioner positionality and pedagogy; (4) define anti-racist teaching; or (5) locate resources and tools to develop as anti-racist educators.	On average, residents reported feeling more equipped in each of these areas.
27% of survey respondents reported actively reflecting on their personal racial socialization, biases, and prejudices vis-a-vis teaching and learning.	51% of residents reported engaging in these processes.
62% of survey respondents felt equipped to challenge manifestations of racism in schools.	92% of survey respondents felt equipped to challenge manifestations of racism in schools.

The success of the RTR DEI forums, along with requests from students and faculty in SOE, led to the development of additional programs. An educator workshop series, titled “Becoming an Antiracist Educator,” was created to provide instruction in the concept of antiracism and give practical guidelines for educators to follow as they work to dismantle systems of inequity in K-12 schools. The SOE DEI committee hosted a series of workshops for faculty titled “Decolonizing the Curriculum.” These allowed faculty to work together to create curriculum for SOE programs that not only provided more thorough instruction related to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion, but also curriculum that highlighted voices of underrepresented minorities and representatives of underserved communities. This shared commitment to diversity, equity, and transformation through education, capacity building, and structural change at the organizational, institutional, and community levels will ensure that TQP funding will impact not only the individuals who are prepared through RTR but all other educators in our community and state who are served by SOE.

In addition, new Virginia licensure requirements (Code of Virginia § 22.1-298.7) which were passed in the 2021 General Assembly session make our focus on equity and culturally responsive pedagogy timely:

- *Teacher Evaluations shall include cultural proficiency efficacy;*
- *Every person seeking initial licensure or renewal of a license shall complete instruction or training in cultural competency; and*
- *Each school board shall adopt and implement policies that require each teacher and any other school board employee holding a license issued by the Board to complete cultural competency training, in accordance with guidance issued by the Board, at least every two years.*

RTR builds on the success of the the DEI workshops and SOE programs by creating learning experiences that support K-12 school leaders' development of (1) transformative leadership skills needed to help staff members and teachers achieve educational excellence; (2) equity-oriented cultural practices that foster environments of access, belonging, and continuous improvement; and, (3) effective facilitative prowess needed to support their school staffs' abilities to lead equity work from inside and outside the classroom. During the residency year, school leaders will gain a deeper understanding of their potential as change agents within the shifting social, political, and cultural milieu of teaching, leading, and learning.

Beyond our work specifically focused on DEI, funding from the Hawkins grant allowed us to pilot a series of workshops in spring 2024 for residents and alumni focused on supporting multilingual students in the K-12 setting. Also included in these workshops is preparation for the ESOL Praxis exam; through grant funding, workshop participants can take the test at no cost to them with the goal of adding the ESOL certification onto their teaching license to become dual licensed. As we move forward with the statewide expansion of the residency program, we will work with school district representatives to identify specific teacher shortage areas that could be addressed by providing additional learning opportunities through workshops or VCU coursework to prepare teachers to add additional endorsements onto their teaching licenses as we have done

with the ESOL endorsement.

Hawkins funding also has allowed CTL to host affinity group meetings to support our diverse educators and school leaders. These monthly meetings provide an opportunity for residents, program graduates, and other educators to build a professional network of individuals with shared backgrounds and interests. We recently hosted a panel discussion at an affinity group meeting focused on female educators of color. The panel featured teachers, school leaders, and university faculty. Panelists shared details of their experiences as female educators of color and how their careers in the field unfolded. Likewise, we have hosted affinity group events specifically focused on Black male educators and LGBTQ+ educators. These events help retain a diverse educator workforce through the development of a professional network, provide the educators with access to resources that they can use with their students, and offer opportunities for professional learning. Additionally, CTL provides workshops to help teachers obtain and maintain National Board Certification. While this program is currently conducted in collaboration with Metro Richmond school districts, as RTR expands its reach across the state, other programs offered by CTL or VCU's SOE can expand with us. Given all of these reasons, RTR is uniquely positioned to build on this successful track record around equity issues and teacher certification to address the needs of our partner districts for more diverse, equity-oriented teachers and school leaders who are prepared to strengthen student learning.

Invitational Priority 1—The Establishment of GYO Programs and Registered

Apprenticeship Programs for K-12 Teachers. As RTR expands to school districts across the state, we will develop recruitment strategies targeted to individuals residing in the community along with pathways to teacher licensure that meet the unique needs of each of our partner LEAs. This will be particularly important in our rural and geographically isolated school districts, as

those districts often face challenges in attracting talent from more urban or suburban areas. We are exploring new state-level opportunities for registered teacher apprenticeship programs. The apprenticeship program would enable us to develop a two-year teacher residency model that mirrors our current graduate-level gradual release calendar and provides individuals from the community who have earned an associate degree the opportunity to complete an undergraduate teacher education program through VCU SOE, culminating in a bachelor's degree. Additionally, participants in this model would fulfill all of the teacher licensure requirements during the undergraduate program, as they are built in as checkpoints during the Bachelor of Science in Education course plans. A key factor in Virginia's registered teacher apprenticeship program plan is that school districts will hire participants as apprentices while they participate in the program. Earning a salary and benefits while they learn will significantly reduce the financial barrier to becoming a teacher, and will open the door to a teaching career for a diverse population of people who otherwise would not have the opportunity.

Invitational Priority 2—Supporting Early Elementary Educators and School Leaders. As previously discussed under Objective 4, RTR will work with VCU faculty to develop workshops to provide professional learning centered on the topic of community and family engagement. Specific workshops, professional learning communities, and peer learning collaboratives will be created as part of this program to tailor the instruction to the audience. School leaders and early elementary educators will participate in professional learning focused specifically on students and families in early elementary grades. Additionally, we will collaborate with experts in the partner school districts and community organizations such as Thrive Birth to Five to develop professional learning opportunities to provide participants with practical steps to help students effectively transition into kindergarten and through the early elementary grades.

A.3. Extent to which RTR Teacher and School Leader Residency is a part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous standards for students:

The VCU SOE graduate-level programs of study, coupled with RTR's residency experience, have proven effective in developing a highly-qualified educator workforce in the Metro Richmond area over the last 14 years. The expansion of the residency model across the state, including to rural and geographically isolated school districts, is the next logical step in our program to ensure that high-need schools across Virginia are staffed by high-quality, well-prepared teachers and school leaders who can help students meet rigorous academic standards and achieve their personal best.

The National Context. The importance of teacher quality and preparation have long been noted to have the strongest impact on student achievement (Hanushek, 2011). Research also shows emerging evidence that teacher residencies effectively recruit and retain diverse, equity-oriented teachers, with promising retention rates and reported improvements in teaching confidence and preparedness (Chu & Wang, 2022). Additionally, there is an ever-broadening consensus that school leaders also have an impact on student achievement (Herman et al., 2018, Özdemir et al., 2022). The link between school leadership and student achievement depends upon school leaders that promote effective instruction through productive relationships with teachers and stakeholders. However, many leaders and teachers leave before they can make an impact on student achievement. Recent research estimates teacher turnover rates around 14% and notes that this is coupled with an increasing number of underqualified teachers staffing classrooms and significantly lower enrollment in teacher preparation programs across the U.S. than in previous years (Nguyen et al., 2022). For school principals, turnover is rampant, with 35% leaving a school in under two years and 18% staying for just one year. Sadly that one-year turnover rate is

even higher in high poverty schools (Levin & Bradley, 2019). This “churn” not only diminishes potential positive effects on student success, but also brings other significant costs, such as a high price for recruiting, hiring, and developing replacements for those lost, estimated at \$20,000 for each new teacher (Learning Policy Institute, 2017) and \$75,000 for each new leader (School Leader Network, 2014). Being inadequately prepared for the role, feeling unsupported by leadership, and working in conditions that include a negative disciplinary climate are among the top reasons for these too-frequent departures (García & Weiss, 2019; Levin & Bradley 2019; Levin et al., 2019; School Leader Network, 2014). School leaders also play a major role in strengthening teacher retention that can drive student achievement. In fact, having an ineffective principal is one of the major reasons teachers cite for leaving their roles. Leaders can influence teacher morale and impact teacher retention by seeking out teacher voice when implementing policy decisions and by building positive relationships through strong communication (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Senechal et al., 2016). If all schools need leaders with these skills, it follows that those schools with higher rates of teacher turnover and high populations of students living in concentrated poverty need them most. These are the schools for which RTR teacher and school leader residents will be prepared to teach and lead.

A State Focus. RTR was designed to meet state priorities. In its Comprehensive Plan for 2018 to 2023, the Virginia Board of Education included a bold vision to guide its actions in the years ahead: “...to create an excellent statewide system of public education that derives strength from diversity and that ensures equity of opportunity for each student in a safe and healthy learning environment that prepares all students to be capable, responsible, and self-reliant citizens in the global society” (Virginia Board of Education, 2017, p. 4). The Board recently noted the state’s commitment to filling teacher vacancies by creating new pathways to licensure and allocating

more resources to recruitment and preparation of teachers (Virginia Board of Education, 2023). Likewise, the state has also provided a recommended action focused specifically on school leaders due to their impact on teacher retention: “Develop mentorship and induction programs and provide professional development support for school leadership training to combat educator turnover” (Virginia Board of Education, 2018, p. 14). Building on several years of focus on critical teacher shortages, Virginia has expanded its focus to include school leaders as a lever for student success. Its work to develop profiles of graduates, teachers, classrooms and school leaders presents a holistic picture of what the Commonwealth is striving to achieve through its K-12 education system. VCU and RTR routinely engage with state officials to ensure that the program is aligned with the focus of the state in preparing and supporting high-quality, effective K-12 educators.

University Priorities. The VCU SOE has developed relationships with school districts throughout the years to ensure that rich clinical experiences are available to all preservice teachers, leaders, counselors, and other education professionals. RTR is able to fully implement this goal through the year-long residency experience. Likewise, SOE has prioritized feedback and advising on program structures and offerings. Recognizing the need for continuous improvement and adaptation, in late fall 2019 the VCU Educational Leadership Department convened a newly-established Educational Leadership Advisory Board--a diverse group of educational leaders and Alumni of the program--to advise programmatic changes. The Board recommended coaching and opportunities to work closely with administrators as ways to support graduate students, both to develop leadership expertise and to better understand the realities of the field; the RTR-SLR model incorporates these programmatic changes.

System-level Experiences. RTR was created more than a decade ago to address school system needs. High rates of teacher attrition in RPS and conversations with CTL about ways to address this challenge led to the development of the innovative teacher residency program. Likewise, the need for a new preparation model for school leaders in high-need schools led to the creation of RTR-SLR. RPS is not alone in seeking new ways to prepare and support teachers and school leaders in their high-need schools. RTR works closely with school district representatives to determine their staffing needs and then collaborates with the district to recruit individuals for the residency program who can help fulfill those staffing needs. We include district- and school-level leaders in discussions about the recruitment and selection of the residents as well as check-ins and ongoing support throughout the residency year and beyond.

An example of meeting school district critical staffing needs is through RTR's coordination of strategies and activities with VCU's National Science Foundation (NSF) funded endeavors to help prepare secondary science and math teachers. Since 2009, VCU has received funding from the NSF through the Robert Noyce Scholarship Program to increase the number of secondary science teachers for high-need schools. Noyce identifies talented undergraduates (Noyce scholars) interested in becoming teachers and prepares them in an immersion program with a master teacher. In 2013, VCU received NSF funding to expand Noyce to include math majors. Since its inception, RTR has worked closely with the Noyce program, leveraging funds from both programs. All science and math teacher residents can apply to be Noyce scholars, which provides them with an additional stipend and access to content-specific teaching resources and high-quality professional development. In addition, RTR provides NTC training to the mentor teachers who work with Noyce scholars in the partner school districts. RTR's efforts to

meet the needs of partner LEAs will continue throughout this expansion and refinement of the model.

A.4. Extent to which RTR reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

Detailed descriptions of the research basis of RTR Teacher and School Leader Residency can be found on pages 9-34.

A.5. Performance feedback and continuous improvement: Continuous improvement is part of the design of the project. As described below in Section B (p. 56), the evaluation plan includes formative reporting which will enable programmatic changes based on the implementation and experiences of participants. Our partner LEAs will be engaged in both decision-making, implementation, and monitoring of the project. The RTR Advisory Board meets twice a year. Advisory Board members have decision making authority and a direct reporting line to their respective superintendent (or dean in the case of VCU). They include individuals like the school district Chief Academic Officer, Director of Human Resources, and Director of Research and Evaluation and department chairs for the elementary, secondary, special education, and educational leadership programs in the VCU SOE. In addition, the RTR Working Subgroup meets once a month to monitor the progress of RTR and review ongoing formative assessment and evaluation data to determine needed revisions to project components. The members of the team consist of the RTR director, the assistant director, two LEA liaisons (an HR and professional development leader), curriculum team, residency coordinators, and admissions and data specialist. In addition, CTL oversees the day-to-day governance and management of RTR. RTR staff meet regularly with each other and with the residents and mentors to monitor the implementation of the project and make adjustments as needed. While VCU serves as CTL's fiscal agent, CTL is not a part of the SOE's teacher or school leader preparation programs and

has a track record of bridging K-12 and higher education through coordination of the Metropolitan Educational Training Alliance (META), a partnership between VCU and the six local school districts (including partners on this proposal).

In addition to this management structure, timely and ongoing feedback will be collected through the weekly collaborative assessment logs through which the residents and their mentors can explain any challenges that they are facing from week to week. The residency coordinators will read and respond every week to the logs and then present problems of practice during the resident seminars and monthly mentor forums, providing ongoing responsiveness to the needs of all participants.

A.6. How the RTR design will build capacity and yield results beyond the TOP grant:

The significant changes implemented through the RTR Teacher and School Leader Residency proposal will be sustainable, in part, because of the true partnership with the partner LEAs. VCU has collaborated with LEAs in efforts to improve student learning through the development of teachers and leaders for many years and has a strong track record of sustaining and expanding its work. TQP grant funding will provide the resources to accelerate the critical work of preparing teachers and school leaders for high-need schools and will provide the time and data necessary to demonstrate effectiveness of this refined, expanded program.

The strong CTL partnerships within RTR extend to a close working relationship with principals at host schools to identify sites that are welcoming to residents (See Appendix H.10 for partnership details). Residents are placed in cohorts within each host school. This allows for not only teacher residents, but school leader residents to work within the same systems of continuous improvement, data-driven decision making to support each other 24/7. In addition, LEAs make every effort to hire RTR grads in cohorts within schools. There are multiple examples of schools in our partner LEAs that have majority RTR residents, graduates, and

mentors. Once RTR-TR graduates have been in the classroom for three years, they can become mentor teachers or they can apply for RTR-SLR. This will develop a critical mass of highly effective and dedicated new teachers and leaders that can help to positively impact the culture of each school.

Section B. Quality of Project Evaluation

Capacity and Expertise The lead evaluators on this project include [REDACTED], Executive Director of the Institute for Collaborative Research and Evaluation (ICRE), and [REDACTED], Professor of Research and Evaluation. ICRE was recently founded as an expansion of the Metropolitan Educational Research Consortium (MERC), an active regional research alliance with established partnerships with area school districts, including several of the partner districts on this proposal. [REDACTED] have worked as evaluators with RTR and other residency programs for over a decade funded by several federal program grants including prior Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) grants, a Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) grant, and the Augustus F. Hawkins Center of Excellence grant. The evaluation team has the qualifications, depth of experience and capacity to complete the evaluation in an unbiased, objective manner that meets existing standards for ethical, credible and effective research and evaluation (Yarbrough et al., 2010).

Table 5. Qualifications of Evaluation Team

<div data-bbox="199 1480 414 1543" data-label="Text"> <p>[REDACTED] Lead Evaluator</p> </div>	<div data-bbox="535 1480 1416 1734" data-label="Text"> <p>[REDACTED] will direct and manage the evaluation. He has led a number of studies closely aligned to the outcomes of the RTR-TR and RTR-SLR program, including studies that investigated school discipline disproportionality, school climate and teacher morale. He has served as the PI on an IES funded Researcher-Practitioner Partnership award designed to enhance educators' culturally responsive teaching practices using action research models (R305H190053), and he currently serves as the PI for both a TQP and SEED grant with the University of Buffalo Teacher Residency program.</p> </div>
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<p>██████████ Senior Evaluator</p>	<p>██████████ will support the design and implementation of the evaluation. She has served as the PI on an NIH funded Science Education Partnership Award (R25 OD010984) that provided professional development to secondary science teachers and on an IES funded Researcher-Practitioner Partnership award (R305H150088) designed to build educators capacity for continuous improvement by supporting principals' and teachers' data-informed decision making and data literacy. ██████████ ██████████ has served as a lead or senior evaluator on a number of federal and state funded projects.</p>
<p>██████████ Research and Evaluation Associate</p>	<p>██████████ supports a broad scope of research and evaluation projects for various school divisions, higher education institutions, community organizations, and governmental agencies. Her past work in educational equity, college access, social consciousness, and leadership development has centered on amplifying the voices and experiences of individuals, families, and communities systematically excluded from equitable educational, personal, and professional opportunities. ██████████ ██████████ currently leads the evaluation of the Augustus F. Hawkins Center for Excellence grant to support educator diversity within RTR.</p>
<p>██████████ Research and Evaluation Associate</p>	<p>██████████ supports a diverse research and evaluation portfolio related to educational programs across various institutions and organizations. With a background in bioengineering, he brings experience in research, teaching, coaching, and mentoring from multiple settings. His areas of interest include student development, student success, workforce development, policy for science, and equity and inclusion.</p>
<p>██████████ Research Faculty and Project Statistician</p>	<p>██████████ is a methodologist and research faculty for the Institute for Collaborative Research and Evaluation. ██████████ and has significant statistical expertise and will conduct quantitative analyses to examine the RTR-TR and RTR-SLR program outcomes and impact.</p>

B.1. Evaluation Design and Rigor of Evidence Produced

Overview of Evaluation Approach. The evaluation design for the Richmond Teacher Residency (RTR-TR) and School Leader Residency (RTR-SLR) programs is structured to ensure the integrity and rigor required for assessing complex educational interventions. **The evaluation will measure the effectiveness of the residency programs in preparing high-quality, diverse educators and educational leaders who are retained in high-need schools and improve student academic and social-emotional outcomes.** This comprehensive approach includes four interconnected studies that integrate quantitative and qualitative methodologies to evaluate program implementation, outcomes, and impacts across the multiple cohorts of teacher residents

(TRs) and school leader residents (SLRs). Studies one through three monitor the program’s implementation over time, utilizing quasi-experimental designs, longitudinal surveys, and case study methodologies to examine the long-term effects on school-level outcomes, including leadership practices, teacher development and retention, and student impact. Concurrently, study four provides **continuous monitoring and formative feedback to support ongoing program improvement**. Quarterly meetings between the evaluation team and program leaders will facilitate the identification of emerging issues and successes, promoting a culture of continuous improvement. See Appendix H.12 for a proposed evaluation timeline.

The evaluation plan is aligned with nationally recognized best practices for the evaluation of teacher residency models and educational leadership preparation, including guidelines from the National Center for the Evaluation of Educational Leadership Preparation and Practice (NCEELPP, Orr et al., n.d.). We also draw upon seminal works such as the RAND evaluation of the New Leaders’ Aspiring Principals Program (Gates et al., 2019), which provides a foundational model for assessing the effectiveness of leadership development programs. These alignments ensure that our evaluation not only meets rigorous academic standards but also contributes to broader policy discussions on teacher residency and educational leadership training. Reports generated from our evaluation will be disseminated to stakeholders, including educational institutions, funders, and policy makers, to support evidence-based improvements in teacher and leader education nationwide.

Evaluation Questions Table 6 presents the evaluation questions across the four studies and indicates the alignment with the four RTR-TR / RTR-SLR program objectives (see page 12).

Table 6. Evaluation studies and questions with alignment to RTR-TR / RTR-SLR program objectives

Evaluation Studies and Questions	RTR-TR / RTR-SLR Program Objectives
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	1	2	3	4
Study One: Longitudinal Comparative School-Level Analysis. Evaluation study one will monitor the effects of the RTR-TR and RTR-SLR program on student outcomes, school climate outcomes, and educator workforce outcomes over time on participating schools (treatment groups) in comparison to matched schools that do not participate (control group).		X	X	
1. What are the differences over time in student outcomes (i.e., school academic performance, attendance rates, and behavior incidence) between schools participating in RTR-TR and RTR-SLR programs and those not participating? 2. What are the differences over time in school climate and working conditions between participating and non-participating schools? 3. What are the differences over time in teacher and school leader retention between participating and non-participating schools? 4. What are the differences over time in educator and school leader diversity between participating and non-participating schools? 5. To what extent is the RTR-TR program addressing teacher vacancies in critical shortage areas?				
Study Two: Longitudinal Program Impact Design. Evaluation study two will monitor implementation and track participant-level and school-level outcomes over time through the collection of primary and secondary data sources at participating schools. This will include a review of RTR program data, LEA system data, and the administration of a set of aligned annual surveys for School Leader Residents (SLRs), Teacher Residents (TRs), Leadership Mentors (LMs) and Teacher Resident Mentors (RMs).		X	X	X
6. What changes in SLR instructional leadership capacity are observed over time? How do these changes vary between school placements and participant-level factors (e.g., demographics, prior experience)? 7. What are participant perceptions of the effects of RTR-SLR instructional leadership practices on teachers' instructional practices and improved school culture and climate? 8. What changes in instructional practice are observed among TRs over time? How do these changes vary between school placements and participant-level factors (e.g., demographics, prior experience)? 9. What are participant perceptions of the effects of RTR-TR instructional practices on students' social emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes? 10. What is the impact of the program on teacher retention rates, particularly in high-need schools, and how does this contribute to reducing educator shortages in areas of critical need? How do these compare to division, state, and national averages?				
Study Three: Qualitative Multi-Case Study of RTR/TR-SLR sites. Evaluation study three will involve multi-case study of three participating schools to understand how the program is implemented across varied school and community context, and to consider the contextual factors that support program success.	X	X	X	X

11. How is the integrated RTR-TR and RTR-SLR model implemented across school case study sites? 12. Within the case schools, what are the experiences and perspectives of program participants on the effectiveness of the RTR-TR and RTR-SLR program on enhancing instructional practice, teaching efficacy, and leadership development? How do the experiences of participants in RTR-TR/RTR-SLR programs vary across different school case contexts? 13. How does participation in RTR-TR/RTR-SLR influence the professional growth of TRs, SLRs, LMs, and RMs? 14. What are the program and school level factors that influence TR and SLR retention? 15. What are the experiences and perspectives of the RMs in the RTR-TR/RTR-SLR program?				
Study Four: Formative Evaluation of Program Implementation. Drawing on the data collection from evaluation studies one through three, evaluation study four will provide ongoing feedback about program implementation and participant experience across school and district contexts and make recommendations to program leaders for program changes to achieve the intended outcomes.				
16. What variations exist/emerge/occur in the implementation of the RTR-TR / RTR-SLR model (i.e., SLR and TR recruitment and selection, mentor selection and training, coursework and seminars, NTC coaching/mentoring model with gradual release, early career support) across the participating schools and school divisions and over time? 17. What aspects of the program contribute to participant preparedness and program satisfaction? 18. How does the partnership between VCU, CTL and the K12 LEAs emerge over the course of the grant? What are the opportunities and challenges of the partnership? 19. What recommendations for program iteration and improvement emerge from the ongoing evaluation studies of RTR-TR and RTR-SLR implementation?				

Data Sources: Table 7 below outlines the data sources that will be used to answer the evaluation questions. Aligned with the TQP performance measures, the data sources include (1) secondary administrative data at both teacher and student level from the state department of education (VDOE), from participating school districts, and from VCU’s School of Education Office of Assessment; (2) primary data sources including surveys, interviews, and focus groups with program participants, key LEA personnel, and RTR program leaders; and (3) documents associated with the program or the participating schools (e.g., websites, meeting agenda, program manuals, etc). In the case of quantitative instruments used for primary data collection,

measures will be identified (from existing validated scales) and/or adapted to meet evaluation needs. When appropriate validity and reliability testing of quantitative instruments will be conducted to ensure technical adequacy. To reduce the burden of primary data collection, several of the evaluation instruments will be used to answer multiple questions, in some cases, across evaluation studies.

Table 7. Summary table of data sources by data type with aligned evaluation questions

Data Type	Data Sources	Eval Qs
	RTR PARTICIPANT DATA (SLRs, TRs, LMs, RMs)	
Quantitative administrative and primary data	Participant profile information. The evaluation will collect information from the RTR and VCU administrative data, and through surveys to create profiles of the participants (SLRs, TRs, LMs and RMs) in the RTR-TR/RTR-SLR program. Profile information will include demographics (race/ethnicity, gender), prior professional experience, residency placement, and content area.	6,7,8,9, 10
Quantitative administrative data	VCU School of Education program data on School Leader Development. A range of program data on SLR participants will be collected to understand growth in knowledge and practice of instructional leadership. This includes: (1) <i>On- Site Supervisor Assessment</i> . Overall and domain assessment scores will be obtained from the VCU SOE Office of Assessment for RTR-SLR students enrolled in Administration and Supervision post-master's certificate programs; (2) <i>ETS, School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA)</i> . Overall and domain SLLA scores will be obtained from the VCU, SOE Office of Assessment for RTR-SLR enrolled in Administration and Supervision post-master's certificate programs; and (3) <i>Evaluation on Virginia Department of Education's Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Principals</i> . Programmatic data on the RTR-SLR program includes evaluation of SLRs on leadership competencies. This data will be collected to assess SLRs reflection and growth across standard indicators over the residency year.	6,7
Quantitative administrative data	VCU Clinical Continuum. Scores on the VCU clinical continuum will provide evidence of TR growth across six professional preparation standards: (1) Creating and maintaining a positive and safe learning environment; (2) Planning for instruction; (3) Engaging and supporting students in learning; (4) Assessing student learning; (5) Developing as a professional; and (6) Advocating for social justice and equity and developing family and community relationships.	8,9
Quantitative administrative data	RT Licensure Scores. Overall scores for the Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment; and Praxis II for Secondary Content; Reading Assessment (RVE) for Elementary and Special Education will be collected.	8,9

Primary quantitative data	<p>Annual Participant Surveys. Surveys will be developed and administered to all SLRs, TRs, LMs, and RMs on an annual basis. The surveys will include established scales adapted for alignment with the program structure, as well as a common set of core items to allow for triangulation across participant groups. Items will be aligned with regularly administered RTR program surveys. Potential adopted/adapted scales will include:</p> <p>For SLRs: <i>School leader and data use practice surveys.</i> Grissom and Loeb (2011) leadership practices survey measures self-ratings of administrative actions and skills across five dimensions of school leadership along with the ACT Principal's Data Use Practice survey (Moore & Shaw, 2017).</p> <p>For TRs: The survey will measure dispositions toward teaching (e.g., self-efficacy) and high-quality instructional practices, including culturally responsive teaching and social-emotional support for students. Possible scales for inclusion are the Culturally Responsive Teaching Scale, a 26-item scale that asks participants to rate the probability (0 to 100) that engaging in specific culturally responsive teaching practices (e.g., "The likelihood of student-teacher misunderstandings decreases when my students' cultural background is understood.") will have positive classroom and student outcomes (Cronbach's alpha = .96; Siwatu, 2007).</p>	6,7,8,9,16,17,18,19
Primary qualitative data	<p>RTR-SLR and RTR-TR Resident/Graduate Interviews. Connected to the multi-case study, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with a purposeful sample of RTR graduates (TR and SLR) as they move through the program from the residency experience into formal administration and teaching positions in the LEA schools. These longitudinal interviews will document the influence of the program on initial teaching and administrative practices and the influence of school context on professional growth and continued model implementation.</p>	11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19
Primary qualitative data	<p>Leadership Mentor and Resident Mentor Interviews. Connected to the multi-case study, semi-structured interviews will be held with LMs and RMs (1) to understand their experiences supporting SLRs and TRs, (2) to understand program implementation, and (3) to solicit perspectives on how the RTR-TR/RTR-SLR model contributes to professional growth and preparedness.</p>	11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19
	SCHOOLS	
Quantitative administrative data	<p>School Profile Information. The evaluation will collect data from state (VDOE) public databases to create school profiles, and track changes over time. Data collected will include school size, urbanicity, teacher diversity, student demographic data (race/ethnicity, EL status, economic disadvantage), school climate, and teacher vacancy rates.</p>	1,2,3,4,5
Quantitative administrative data	<p>SLR and TR Retention. Additional hiring and retention data for participating schools will be collected from partner LEAs to examine changes in hiring (e.g., increased diversity) and retention patterns compared to schools of non-RTR-SLR leaders.</p>	10
	STUDENTS	

Quantitative administrative data	Student Outcome Data. For study one, to assess school-level effects on the outcomes of students at participating schools, data will be pulled from publicly-reported VDOE data. This will include information on standardized assessment performance (Standards of Learning Scores in English, Mathematics, and Science), attendance (e.g., days present, absent, late), behavior infractions (in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension).	1, 2, 3
	OTHER DATA SOURCES	
Primary qualitative data	Key Stakeholder Interviews and Focus Groups. Other key stakeholders will participate in interviews and/or focus groups on a regular basis to gather information about implementation and to understand the experiences, perspectives and satisfaction of those highly involved in the management of the program. This could include informal interviews/focus groups with RTR-TR/RTR-SLR program leaders, VCU faculty, partner LEA leaders, and school-level administrators.	16,17,18, 19
Primary qualitative data	Project team / evaluation team meetings. Quarterly meetings will be held between the evaluation team and the program team for the purpose of continuous improvement and discussion of formative findings. These meetings will be recorded to document program leaders' insights and perspectives.	16,17,18, 19
Secondary qualitative data	Relevant program and school materials/documents. Materials and documents relevant to the evaluation questions will be collected to support the understanding of program implementation and program context across sites. This could include websites, program manuals, and meeting agendas.	16,17,18, 19

B.2. Formative and Summative Evaluation Design Components Aligned with RTR

Goals and Outcomes

Study One: Longitudinal Comparative School Level Analysis (EQ 1-5)

The purpose of study one is to evaluate the impact of the integrated RTR-TR and RTR-SLR programs on student outcomes, school climate, and educator workforce outcomes over time. This study will use a quasi-experimental design, leveraging publicly available aggregate school-level data, to compare schools participating in the RTR programs (treatment group) with matched non-participating schools (control group). To ensure the comparability of treatment and control schools, we will employ Propensity Score Matching (PSM) (Powell et al., 2020). PSM will match schools based on key characteristics such as community context, student demographics,

prior academic performance, and school size. This matching process reduces selection bias, creating statistically similar control groups that provide a valid comparison for assessing program impact. The primary analytic method will be a Difference-in-Differences (DiD) (Callaway & Sant’Anna, 2021) approach. DiD is well-suited for evaluating policy interventions over time by comparing changes in outcomes between treatment and control groups before and after the intervention. This method controls for time-invariant unobserved heterogeneity and pre-existing trends, ensuring that observed differences can be attributed to the integrated RTR-TR and RTR-SLR programs. Specifically, we will analyze aggregate data on average standardized test scores, attendance rates, and behavior incident rates to assess student outcomes, along with school climate indicators and educator workforce metrics such as retention rates and diversity. The analysis will incorporate schools that are added with each successive cohort of RTR-TR and RTR-SLR participants. Additionally, we will incorporate fixed effects models (Borenstein, et al. 2010) to control for unobserved, time-invariant characteristics at the school level. By including school fixed effects, we can account for factors that remain constant over time, further isolating the impact of the programs on the observed outcomes. Data will be collected annually, establishing a baseline in Year 1 and continuing through Years 2-5. This longitudinal approach allows us to monitor changes and assess both short-term and long-term impacts of the programs. Short-term outcomes include improved school climate and working conditions, increased retention rates, and reduced teacher vacancies in critical areas. Long-term outcomes aim for sustained improvements in student performance and enhanced educator workforce diversity.

Study Two: Longitudinal Program Impact Design (EQ 6-10)

Study two aims to evaluate the longitudinal impact of the RTR-TR and RTR-SLR programs on participants, including Teacher Residents (TRs), School Leader Residents (SLRs), Leadership Mentors (LMs), and Teacher Resident Mentors (RMs), as well as on school-level outcomes. Utilizing existing administrative data and annual surveys, this study will provide insights into the programs' effectiveness. Data collection will leverage VCU's RTR-TR and RTR-SLR program records, including participant demographics, participant program performance, and licensure exam scores (see table 7). This administrative data offers a foundation for tracking participant progress and outcomes. Additionally, annual surveys will be developed and piloted in the first year, employing both established and adapted measures relevant to the residency model. These surveys will be consistently administered to all participants to assess impacts on instructional practices, leadership capacity, and school culture. The evaluation employs a longitudinal design (Gustafsson, 2010), following participants across cohorts through the program and into their early careers to monitor changes over time. This approach allows for the assessment of both immediate and sustained program impacts. Surveys will include quantitative items, capturing key metrics, and qualitative insights through open-ended questions, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of participant experiences and program effects (see table 7). Analytically, the study will use descriptive statistics to summarize participant demographics, program performance, and survey responses. Repeated measures ANOVA using SPSS 29 will be employed to analyze changes within participants over time for continuous outcomes such as instructional leadership capacity and instructional practices (Strunk, & Mwavita, 2020). Comparative analysis will contextualize retention rates and other key outcomes against division, state, and national averages.

Study Three: Qualitative Multi-Case Study of RTR/TR-SLR sites (EQ 11-15)

The purpose of study three is to evaluate the implementation and impacts of the integrated RTR-TR and RTR-SLR programs through a qualitative multi-case study (Yin, 2009) over the five-year funding period. The primary goal is to capture the nuanced effects of the integrated RTR-TR/RTR-SLR residency model on instructional leadership practice, teacher instructional practice, and school culture and climate across diverse school contexts. Cases will be purposefully selected (Suri, 2011) in Year 2 of the study based on criteria identified in study one, including school size, level (elementary or secondary), student demographics, geographic location (urban, suburban, rural), and initial performance metrics. Within each case, TRs and SLRs will be interviewed over the course of their residency, and into their post-program years of teaching and school leadership. Additionally, in the residency year at each site, leadership mentors, resident mentors, and other school administrators will be interviewed to better understand program implementation and the school context. Document analysis of program manuals, meeting agendas, and school reports will also be used to contextualize findings. The analysis will be primarily descriptive and qualitative, focusing on thematic and narrative analysis, however, quantitative data from studies one and two will provide background information and support an explanatory mixed-methods design (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2011). This design uses qualitative findings to interpret and make sense of the quantitative results, offering a deeper understanding of how and why the programs affect teaching efficacy, leadership development, and student outcomes. All qualitative data (focus groups, interviews) will be audio recorded, transcribed and imported into ATLAS.ti v. 8.1 for analysis. The analytic process will involve systematic and iterative code development and documentation procedures for team-based coding and analysis (MacQueen et al., 1998). We will employ deductive and

inductive approaches to analysis to develop analytic codes reflective of RTR-R and RTR-SLR program theory and emergent ideas (Miles et al., 2014; Saldaña, 2016).

Study Four: Formative Evaluation of Program Implementation (EQ 16-19)

The formative evaluation of the RTR-TR and RTR-SLR programs is designed to provide continuous, actionable feedback to enhance program implementation and outcomes (Patton, 2013). **This approach integrates data and analysis from three preceding studies**, ensuring a comprehensive analysis. Quarterly meetings between the evaluation team and program leaders will involve eliciting questions from the program team, sharing emerging findings from studies one through three, and providing recommendations for continuous improvement. The evaluation team will generate formative evaluation memos drawing on qualitative and quantitative data, including surveys, interviews, focus groups, and administrative records, this evaluation ensures a holistic understanding of program dynamics. By incorporating longitudinal comparative analyses (study one and two) and mixed-method case studies (study three), we capture both broad trends and nuanced insights into participant experiences and program impacts. **This iterative feedback process promotes continuous improvement, allowing the program to adapt based on evidence and stakeholder input.** This approach is justified by its alignment with best practices in program evaluation, emphasizing stakeholder engagement, data integration, and iterative improvement. It ensures that the RTR programs are responsive to the needs of participants and the evolving educational landscape, ultimately enhancing teacher and school leader preparation and contributing to positive student outcomes in high-need schools.

Section C. Adequacy of Resources

C.1. Facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources to support RTR: RTR will be located in CTL at the VCU SOE. VCU has the resources associated with a research institution. With more than \$40 million in funded research, SOE is among the top research schools in the

U.S. and is ranked 25th by *US News & World Report* (2024) as one of the nation's top graduate programs in education and 16th among public graduate schools of education. The VCU SOE offers a variety of services to support faculty. These include Business Services and The Office of Research and Faculty Development to assist faculty with grant development and post-award management. Additionally, SOE has its own Instructional Technology Center with a dedicated staff providing frontline support for faculty and students through a help desk ticket system, email, or walk-up service. The IT Department provides training and support on hardware, software, and other instructional technology related areas. SOE faculty members have offices and appropriate technology (e.g., computers, software) to conduct their work. Classrooms are also outfitted with the technology needed for online instruction. As additional support, and to augment SOE facilities, our rental space request is to provide office space for additional staff, our rental space request includes offices for RTR staff members and a dedicated training room to conduct all training for the TRs, SLRs, LMs, and Career Coaches. Because of the interactive nature of the training sessions and the need to secure training space for all-day sessions over multiple days, there are no LEA schools or VCU facilities that can accommodate our training space needs.

C.2. Adequacy of the budget to support RTR: Our budget reflects investments in two key areas: (1) human capacity and (2) material capacity.

Human capacity: RTR and NTC mentoring models rely heavily on training and coaching support that will be provided by VCU faculty and RTR staff. For this reason, funds will primarily be focused on positions that support the coordination and implementation of the project (see budget narrative on position descriptions). In particular, the roles of residency coordinators and curriculum developers and designers are **key to the success of the refinement**

and expansion of RTR whose ultimate goal is to build human capacity within our partner LEAs. Stemming the constant turnover of teachers and school leaders in high-need schools requires individuals who are committed to serving in these contexts and are well-prepared to create conditions in which teachers and students can do their best work. It also requires the development of in-service teachers and school leaders who can mentor residents and novice teachers, serve as instruction leaders within their schools, and lead school improvement efforts. Tables 2 and 3 on pages 32-34 provide an overview of the TR and SLR programs, respectively, and describe the duration and intensity of the training and support that residents will receive to increase their capacity to be successful.

We have requested a stipend of [REDACTED] for teacher residents and [REDACTED] for school leader residents which also represents an investment in human capacity by enabling us to recruit a more diverse pool of candidates and ensure that the residents are able to fully focus on their clinical preparation and graduate-level coursework.

Material Capacity: Material resources include the creation of modules that will enhance the VCU coursework and provide case studies and practical experiences in which TRs and SLRs will be able to apply theory to practice. SOE and CTL have been proactive in creating modalities and providing technology that will ensure the successful implementation of RTR-TR-SLR. In addition, as RTR expanded into multiple school districts, the training room was equipped with the technology to conduct our seminars and monthly mentor forums virtually. We are not requesting funds for these things but provide them as evidence of our ability to carry out the project.

C.3. and C.5. Reasonableness of costs, potential significance, relevance, and commitment of each partner in the implementation and success of RTR.

Reasonableness of Costs. RTR will recruit, prepare, and support 175 new, diverse teachers and school leaders in some of the hardest to staff schools in Virginia with skills to support students who have historically been marginalized. In addition, for each teacher and school leader recruited, we anticipate preparing and supporting current teachers and leaders to serve as mentors and career coaches, increasing their skills and commitment to the profession. RTR's partnership with VUU, an HBCU, will increase their capacity to develop residency programs and will help close the racial and ethnic gaps between teachers and principals and the students they serve. A federal investment in RTR will leverage the already strong financial commitment of our LEA partners who have agreed to a cost share for the TR program and have agreed to hire the SLRs in a leadership role during their residency year—and release them for a portion of the day to learn how to be an effective school leader alongside their mentor. As noted earlier, the philanthropic community has provided more than \$500K, and the state annually invests over \$1 million to support teacher residents.

RTR is the first and longest standing residency model in the Commonwealth and through this grant will be the first with a statewide footprint. As such, RTR will serve as a model for others. The success of RTR is the reason that the Virginia General Assembly now provides funding to expanding teacher residency programs throughout the state. Prior to RTR, there was no understanding of nor support for this kind of teacher preparation model within Virginia. Given VCU's history and reputation in Virginia for developing innovative, effective teacher preparation programs, we believe that TQP funding for the refined, expanded model could result in additional funding for teacher and school leader residencies.

Finally, in determining the reasonableness of costs, we must consider what the costs are to students, school districts, our state, and our nation if we do not do this work. The research is

clear. The quality of the teachers in our schools is the most important school-based factor in student achievement (Cochran-Smith et al., 2015; Darling-Hammond, 2008)—and principals hire, develop, and retain teachers and create conditions in which both teachers and students can succeed. With the changing demographics of our state and nation—Virginia public schools are now over 50% minority—we can no longer ignore the inequities that exist in our community, state, and nation in providing effective teachers and school leaders for all students (VDOE, 2023).

Potential Significance and Relevance. Facing the rising inequality of K-12 opportunity and the persistent achievement gaps that follow, school systems nationwide are seeking strategies that produce strong and stable teaching and leadership to not only support but also sustain student learning and school improvement. RTR will help identify key strategies that can be applied in the diverse school contexts that serve high populations of students with unmet needs.

Successful outcomes from key components of RTR in its original four LEA partnerships give reason to expect significant achievement outcomes from this refined expansion as well. As previously noted, RTR teachers prepared with the NTC coaching model have significantly higher student achievement outcomes compared to similar colleagues not prepared with this model. In addition, RTR graduates demonstrate success in other measures that also inform our expectations for the expansion. For example, on a 2024 survey, principals strongly agreed that RTR graduates contributed positively to school culture. In terms of teacher retention, while nationally 44% to 74% of teachers leave within the first 3 years in urban schools (Ingersoll, 2004; Papay et al., 2017), 99% of RTR graduates have been retained for one year, 91% for two years, and 83% of RTR graduates have been retained for 3 or more years. The impact of 175 highly effective new

teachers and leaders, who were specifically prepared to work in the high-need school setting, will be substantial.

Contribution to the Field of Educator Preparation. RTR is based on common needs and promising practices identified across national, state, and local contexts. The ability of university/K-12 system partnerships to “bridge theory and practice in a way that is context-specific” while addressing similar challenges that face all new school leaders, offers a strong foundation from which RTR can learn and scale success to additional settings (Young & Crow, 2017, p. 137).

Commitment of Each Partner to Implementation and Success of RTR: As described in Section A.5. on pages 54-55, both VCU and our LEA partners are contributing significant time of their leaders and staff to ensure the success of RTR by actively engaging in its design, implementation, and monitoring of the project.

A TQP grant in 2010 gave us the resources and time to design and pilot the RTR teacher residency. The success of RTR has led to a shared investment model in which our partner LEAs now contribute significant dollars to the model—paying the cost of the mentor stipends and training, and the cost of career coaches. LEA partnership commitment is also evidenced in RTR-SLR as LEAs hire the residents and free them for at least three hours per day to learn how to be an effective school leader alongside their mentor. Additionally, the philanthropic community stepped in as a partner to fund the pilot of RTR-SLR.

C.4. Prospects for RTR’s Long-Term Success: As noted above, there is a strong commitment from our LEA partners to the success of RTR—both in terms of their active engagement in decision-making, implementation, and monitoring of the project and in terms of their financial commitment. The LEA partners’ contribution to the cost share that includes the salary and fringe

of the SLRs while they are learning to be effective school leaders is significant, comprising almost 50% of the required match in Years 1 and the majority of the match in Years 2-5; school leader mentors time to work with the SLRs; and time of central office staff to design, implement, and monitor RTR-TR-SLR. As we have experienced with RTR in which success brought state support and support from multiple philanthropic organizations, we believe we will have the same support once RTR-TR-SLR is able to design and implement a successful school leader residency preparation model.

In fact, it was RTR's success that led the R.E.B. Foundation to invest in the initial small pilot of a school leader residency. Our model includes the three major expenditure categories associated with residency programs: (1) Residents (tuition and stipends); (2) Mentors (stipends and professional development); and (3) Program (staff, recruitment, and evaluation). Our resource streams include VCU (see letters from Dean Kathleen Rudasil and Dean Catherine DeGrassia), LEAs (see letter from Superintendents), the Virginia State Department of Education (see letter from Ms. Lisa Coons), and the Richmond philanthropic community (see letters from R.E.B Foundation and The Cameron Foundation). In addition, we will explore other sources of funding that include private foundations. As described above, RTR enjoys strong support among all partners and increasingly among policymakers in Virginia. The fact that so many individuals and organizations have already committed a significant amount of financial and in-kind support speaks volumes about the quality of the RTR Program and the strength of the LEA/VCU partnership.

Section D. Quality of Management Plan

D.1. Management Plan:

Quality of Management Plan: The work plan below represents a thorough and thoughtful plan to implement all project goals and objectives on time and within budget.

The overarching goal of the RTR Teacher and School Leader Residency proposal is to further refine, expand, and evaluate the impact of the innovative RTR Teacher and School Leader Residency on teacher retention and student outcomes in high-need schools across the state.		
Objective 1: Refine and implement an integrated teacher and school leader residency program for high-need schools.		
Major Project Milestones	Timeline	Persons Responsible
Work closely with partner LEAs to determine optimum ways to identify teacher and school leader candidates and identify specific content area needs for their high need schools.	Fall and Winter 2024	[REDACTED]
Develop online courses in each of the programs: Educational Leadership Special Education Secondary Education Elementary Education	Spring 2025	[REDACTED]
Revise and strengthen existing online academic coursework to align with district specific teacher and school leader residency experiences.	Annually beginning Spring 2025	[REDACTED]
Hire Residency Coord. (RC)/ Leadership Mentor Coord. (LMC)	Spring 2025	[REDACTED]
RTR and LEA recruitment, selection, and matches for TRs, SLRs and mentors.	Fall 2024 - Spring 2025	[REDACTED]
Adapt NTC training for in-person or online attendance options in preparation of Summer 2025.	Spring 2025	[REDACTED]
Launch Teacher and School Leader Residency.	Summer 2025	[REDACTED]
Conduct first NTC coaching and mentor training	Summer 2025	[REDACTED]
Prepare and lead monthly teacher and school leader residency seminars to further connect coursework and residency experience.	Fall 2025 - Spring 2026	[REDACTED] Consultants

Provide coaching support for teacher and school leader mentors through monthly professional learning forums (and as needed).	Fall 2025 - Spring 2026	██████████ Lead Mentor Coordinator
LEAs ensure TRs and SLRs are in a teaching or school leader position for following school year	Spring 2026	██████████
Organize and lead Navigating the Life of a Real Teacher as part of TR post-residency support.	Summer 2026	██████████
TR and SLRs receive post-residency support for two years after their residencies.	Fall 2026/Spring 2027	██████████ New Teacher Coach
Ongoing professional development - webinar series, trauma-informed practices, multilingual learner support, community engagement support		██████████
Develop a School Leader Support Network	Start Summer 2026 and continue	██████████
Note: Following cohorts of Teacher and School Leader Residents will complete the same process outlined above.		
Objective 2: Strengthen the instructional leadership capacity of school leader residents and leadership mentors while enhancing the practices of teacher residents.		
Major Project Milestones	Timeline	Persons Responsible
Train mentors and school leader residents in NTC Instructional Coaching model	May 2025	██████████
Mentors and school leader residents attend ongoing trainings of NTC Instructional Coaching & Mentoring	Begins Summer 2025	██████████
Mentors provide ongoing feedback and support through the collaborative logs and NTC tools	Begins August 2025	██████████
Monthly meetings with SLRs and mentors to enhance instructional coaching skills and discuss challenges	Begins August 2025	██████████
After trained in NTC, SLRs will observe and provide feedback to teachers in their buildings including teacher residents.	Spring 2026	██████████ Contracted staff
Residency Coordinators and SOE Faculty travel to partner districts to meet with and observe resident	Begins Fall 2025	██████████ Residency Coordinators, SOE Faculty

instructional practices and will modify coursework to address gaps in instructional practices.		
Objective 3: Promote a collaborative culture of continuous improvement that supports the social, emotional, and academic needs of students.		
Major Project Milestones	Timeline	Persons Responsible
Plan with Alliance for Unitive Justice to tailor delivery of Restorative Justice for School Culture Change for school leader residents and mentors.	Fall 2025	[REDACTED]
School leader residents and mentors attend Restorative Justice for School Culture Change with Alliance for Unitive Justice training	Summer 2026	[REDACTED]
Host monthly seminars and modules for school leader residents on restorative practices, trauma-informed practices through SCAN, and emotional leadership training.	Fall 2025/Spring 2026	[REDACTED]
Work with both SCAN and VCU's School of Social Work to develop professional learning opportunities for teacher residents during their monthly seminars to include topics on trauma informed practice, managing the impact of trauma exposure in the classroom, and strategies for building resilience in the classroom.	Fall 2025/Spring 2026	[REDACTED]
Objective 4: Develop and implement a model for continuous professional growth and community engagement among school leaders and teachers.		
Major Project Milestones	Timeline	Persons Responsible
Outline a series of workshop topics on family engagement	Summer 2025	RTR and VCU faculty
Establish a network of program alumni and mentors	Spring 2025	[REDACTED]
Establish relationships with local leaders and historians who can provide opportunities for residents, RTR staff, and VCU faculty to learn more about the school and community context	Winter 2024-2025	[REDACTED]

D.2. Procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement of RTR.

See Section A.5. on pages 54-55 for the organizational structures and processes that will ensure ongoing feedback and continuous improvement. In addition, the project includes a comprehensive formative evaluation (Section B) that involves regular data collection related to key performance indicators such as teacher growth, teacher retention, and student performance. In the evaluation, data will be gathered, analyzed and shared through quarterly meetings to identify areas for improvement. This iterative process will enable the project team to make interactive adjustments and enhance the program continuously.