

# South Carolina Residencies Impacting Schoolwide Equity-SC RISE

*An Early-phase Application for Education Innovation and Research Support*

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## **A. Significance**

The South Carolina Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA) is pleased to submit this early-phase application for the South Carolina Residencies Impacting Schoolwide Equity (SC RISE) project in collaboration with four institutions of higher education (IHEs). The project addresses four priorities of the 2024 Education Innovation and Research (EIR) competition: Absolute Priority 1: Demonstrates a Rationale; Absolute Priority 5: Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities: Educator Recruitment and Retention; Competitive Preference Priority (CPP) 1: Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities: Implementers and Partners; and CPP 2: Addressing the Impacts of COVID-19 on students, educators, and faculty.

As the oldest and most established teacher recruitment program in the country, CERRA's mission is to recruit and retain qualified, caring, and competent teachers for all of South Carolina's schools.<sup>\*1</sup> A statewide organization funded by the state General Assembly, CERRA is located on the campus of and fiscally sponsored through Winthrop University. Winthrop also has a rich history in educator preparation, opening its doors as a teacher training school in 1886. Leadership in the College of Education, Sport, and Human Sciences plays a central role in partnership with CERRA and in statewide discussions of teacher preparation quality including advocating for and providing extended, paid clinical practice to ensure that aspiring teachers can afford high-quality pathways into the profession. Winthrop will join three additional IHEs- Clemson University, Columbia College, and the University of South Carolina-under CERRA's leadership to test an innovative and promising educational approach to reimagine schools, provide extensive supports for student success in high-need areas, and transform the education system. All four IHEs have successfully developed evidence-based teacher residencies to recruit, prepare, and retain teachers for rural high-need areas. SC RISE provides an opportunity to coalesce efforts to make an impact on schools and students across the entire state and beyond.

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\* Endnotes begin on page 26 and are also included as Narrative Appendix A.

Three goals guide the project's design and evaluation: 1) Develop a whole school model for recruiting, preparing, and retaining teachers who have a positive impact on student learning; 2) Provide PK-12 students with personalized supports through a whole school model of teacher residency integration/utilization; and 3) Establish statewide practices and sustainable funding for teacher residencies. Goals 1 and 2 are incorporated in the Absolute and Competitive priorities; Goal 3 builds the foundation for SC RISE to promote the kinds of systemic shifts that will need to occur for a successful Early-phase project to move to a Mid-phase application.

*Absolute Priority 1: Demonstrates a Rationale.*

SC RISE builds upon research-based strategies shown to be highly effective in recruiting and preparing teachers who positively impact student outcomes in high-needs schools. A What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Intervention Report summarizing findings across high-quality evaluations of Teach for America (TFA) that meet WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook Version 3.0 found strong evidence that TFA teachers have positive effects on student math scores.<sup>2</sup> SC RISE uses the three essential components of the TFA model: selective admissions, intensive pre-service training, and intentional placement and induction supports. The project exceeds the evidence rationale for an EIR Early-phase project required by the proposal guidance.

*Absolute Priority 5: Educator Recruitment and Retention*

Goal 1 of SC RISE enhances this evidence-based approach through innovative project components with research suggesting they are likely to promote equity and improve student outcomes in both the short- and long-term.<sup>3</sup> The first is year-long teacher residencies, a promising preparation model that provides rigorous pre-service training before aspirants become teachers of record.<sup>4</sup> Teachers, like all professionals, must master a complex interplay understanding their field and being able to apply that to nuanced situations, no two of which are precisely the same.<sup>5</sup> Paid, supervised work requirements from 1,500 hours to several years are part of certification for architects, engineers, hairdressers, and pharmacists before they can be licensed to practice independently.<sup>6</sup> Teaching has not followed that standard, allowing for fast-

track entry into the profession when unpaid preparation programs do not graduate the teachers districts needed. Paid residencies aligned to district needs improve upon the historic practice of student teaching that give aspiring teachers the opportunity to become fully qualified in a supervised context with an accomplished mentor before being entrusted to teach.

Evaluations of residencies offer promising evidence of impacts, especially around retention in historically underserved schools, where turnover negatively affects student outcomes.<sup>7</sup> Studies of individual residency program graduates' retention rates range from 80% to 95% after three years, and from 70% to 80% after 5 years, compared to 50% or lower for non-residents across high-need schools.<sup>8</sup> An analysis of federally funded residency programs also found a statistically significant positive difference in residency graduates' retention rates.<sup>9</sup> Retention matters because high-needs students are more likely to be taught by a revolving door of novice teachers. Since first-year teachers have less positive impacts on student outcomes compared to experienced teachers, preparing new teachers through pathways that increase retention helps address persistent achievement challenges in high-needs schools.<sup>10</sup> Promising evidence also shows that residency graduates are more effective than other first year teachers.<sup>11</sup> Scores on graduation exams have been stronger in residency graduates' classes;<sup>12</sup> their students have outperformed other first year teachers' students on statewide exams;<sup>13</sup> and achievement in most subjects for residency graduates' students have exceeded other novice teachers' scores.<sup>14</sup> Finally, since paid residencies are twice as likely to attract candidates from diverse backgrounds, PK-12 students benefit from a stable workforce that is more representative of their own backgrounds.<sup>15</sup>

As EIR intends, SC RISE does not simply expand a promising intervention; residencies are embedded within a comprehensive schoolwide model to reimagine schooling, where residents and the students and mentor teachers experience a range of supports that prepare them for the responsibilities and challenges teachers continue to face since the pandemic. For this early-phase project, teacher residents will be placed in cohorts of at least five in high-need middle schools, defined as schools qualifying for Title I Schoolwide status (Narr. App. J.2). SC RISE ultimately will scale across all geographies and school levels once the model's feasibility and impact have

been tested through the Early-phase evaluation, but the project initially focuses on high-need middle schools because of their dire need for a more stable teaching force. One-year middle school teacher retention is 76.6%, consistently lower and on a downward trajectory compared to elementary (81%) and high school (81.3%) retention.<sup>16</sup>

This innovation of developing school sites that host cohorts of residents has been designed around the American Institutes for Research (AIR) principles for successful turnarounds of high-need schools and districts to both reimagine schools and dramatically improve outcomes for high-need students.<sup>17</sup> SC RISE will incorporate four features aligned with the AIR framework into the schoolwide residency design. First, the project will support schools' exploration of flexible and team-based staffing models to strengthen school culture and staffing efficiencies,<sup>18</sup> meeting several principles of the AIR framework, such as helping retain teachers, supporting teacher well-being, leveraging resources, and strengthening instruction. Having a cohort of residents in a school can greatly facilitate these models because of the increased availability of staffing.<sup>19</sup> Second, the project will support teachers pursuing National Board Certification, which is associated with improved outcomes for students<sup>20</sup> and will strengthen mentor teachers' capacity to support residents and step into distributed and team-based leadership roles. South Carolina provides a \$5,000 salary supplement to National Board Certified Teachers,<sup>21</sup> an additional incentive towards retention in high-turnover schools.

Third, the project will incorporate evidence-based pre-service co-teaching into the design to improve student access and opportunity per the AIR framework. Co-teaching was initially developed to ensure special education students in inclusive settings have the supports they need to succeed, an approach that will support special needs students in identified middle schools.<sup>22</sup> Recently, a longitudinal analysis of special education co-teaching using fixed effects models found significant positive impacts of co-teaching for both regular and special education students across Massachusetts.<sup>23</sup> Co-teaching has also been used in pre-service models, where a rigorous evaluation found statistically significantly higher test scores across nearly every subgroups and subjects compared to both regular student teaching placements and classrooms with no student

teacher at all.<sup>24</sup> The practice of co-teaching is a required collaborative structure of the residency, providing a rigorous experience for the resident, allowing the mentor to remain involved in the classroom, and enriching PK-12 students' quality of learning. Co-teaching supports continuous mentoring as the resident refines skills necessary to be successful. The various co-teaching models give the mentor and resident opportunities for increased collaboration, strategies for meeting diverse learner needs, and research-based methods of increasing student achievement.<sup>25</sup>

Finally, evidence increasingly demonstrates the positive value of a teaching force that reflects the diversity of its students. While all students benefit from teachers with different backgrounds, students of color in particular, realize stronger outcomes when they have teachers who look like them.<sup>26</sup> Having even one Black teacher between pre-K and fifth grade increases the chance that Black students will attend college by 13%; with two Black teachers, they are 32% more likely to attend college,<sup>27</sup> gains most pronounced for Black boys from low socioeconomic backgrounds. In South Carolina, 60% of SC RISE-identified districts' enrollment is comprised of students of color, but teachers of color account for only 29% of the teaching force.<sup>28</sup> The SC RISE project will address this inequity through community-based recruitment to encourage Grow Your Own enrollments<sup>29</sup> and programmatic articulations with both community colleges and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), as detailed next.

#### *Competitive Preference Priority 1: Implementers and Partners*

SC RISE is designed with participation from a coalition of preparation programs across the state of South Carolina that want to redesign the teacher preparation ecosystem so every aspiring teacher enters the profession through a paid residency and so historic inequities in access to educational resources-at both the PK-12 and higher education levels-are addressed. To that end, SC RISE has designed a two-pronged approach to incorporating educational partners from historically underrepresented sectors into the project. First, the four participating IHEs, under the leadership of CERRA's mission and vision, will each recruit and prepare a cohort of middle school residents in Years 2-5 of the project, allowing SC RISE to fine-tune the residency design

and draw strengths from across the state's current residency programs. Each of these IHEs has current partnerships with community colleges and HBCUs, and these local partnerships will be central to residency recruitment efforts (Narr. App. J.3). These efforts will diversify the teaching workforce-but, alone, they would not broaden institutional access to educational resources for HBCUs and community colleges. So, an SC RISE Steering Committee including these partners, will actively engage in a Year 1 design and Years 1-5 learning process to ensure developing models bring these underrepresented groups' strengths and needs to the table.

*Competitive Preference Priority 2: Addressing the Impact of COVID-19*

The design for SC RISE, particularly reflected in Goal 2, embraces the Administration's call to understand and systematically address impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including exacerbated long-standing gaps in educational opportunity for underserved communities. SC RISE will redesign how residency schools create learning environments that address a range of student needs through a three-tiered approach. First, research shows that when teachers develop an awareness of community and context, their potential to develop a deeper understanding of their students and their ability to be able to connect learning experiences to student backgrounds within the context of their communities increases.<sup>30</sup> Accordingly, resident cohorts will map assets available in their school communities (Narr. App. J.4). Second, to better address the educational needs of students most impacted by the instructional losses and out-of-school impacts of the pandemic, educators in each school will receive targeted professional development based upon COVID-19 impacts and identified learning barriers in three evidence-based approaches: Trauma-informed educational practices to promote a safe learning environment and student resilience,<sup>31</sup> high-leverage special education practices based in Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to benefit all students,<sup>32</sup> and effective school-family-community engagement practices that support parents in being active and effective partners with schools to promote student attendance, engagement, and access to educational resources.<sup>33</sup>

Finally, these evidence-based approaches will be incorporated into pre-service coursework and coaching to ensure aspiring educators enter the profession equipped to disrupt historic inequities.

*Goal 3: Establish statewide practices and sustainable funding for teacher residencies.*

The ultimate goal of SC RISE is to build a statewide system of funded residencies that prepare fully qualified teachers who reflect the demographics of the communities where they will teach in schools that have been redesigned to provide safer, more responsive, more effective learning and working environments. The Steering Committee, led by CERRA, will facilitate efforts to create a shared policy framework for teacher residencies in South Carolina that braids funding from state, local, and federal sources to ensure that aspiring teachers can afford strong preparation through pathways that are integrated into PK-12 schoolwide residencies programs. *Prepared To Teach* will bring its national expertise to sustainability efforts.<sup>34</sup> This goal will establish the foundation for scaling the initiative to the whole state in a future mid-phase grant.

## **B. Quality of the Project Design**

### *B.1 Conceptual Framework*

The conceptual framework for SC RISE rests in an understanding that teachers matter, and learning to teach effectively takes time. Admittedly, many tangible and intangible supports play into education's ability to have positive impacts on students. Early childhood experiences, safe environments, supportive homes and communities, adequate resources to provide a range of learning and developmental opportunities, productive school-community connections, good leadership—all of these make a difference in our education system. But without strong, well-prepared teachers, none of these—not even all of them together—can support students' classroom learning and development. For a majority of students, their teachers account for the most significant portion of time they spend interacting with adults during the school year. Who those teachers are and what they know matters.

Developments in the science of learning and development make clear that teachers must know more than disciplinary information and how to manage a class.<sup>35</sup> The human brain does not

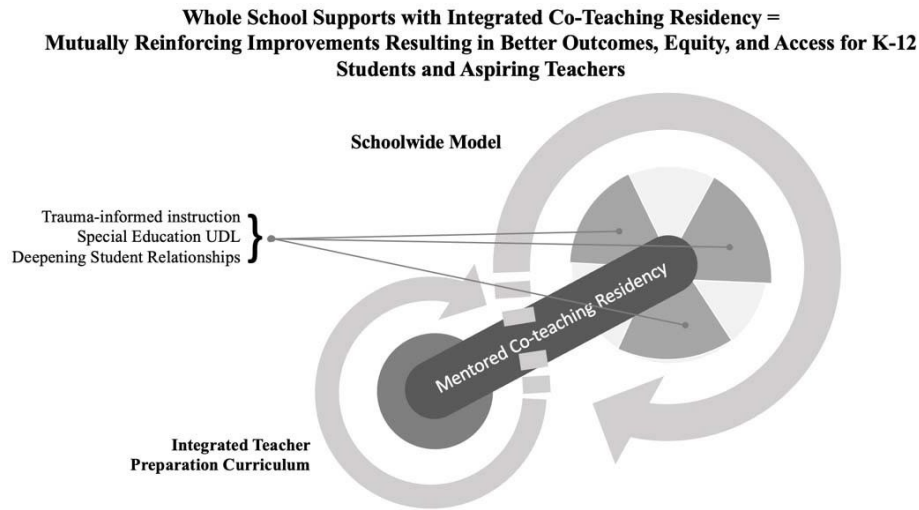


learn in isolation; it is part of an ecosystem that includes the body's social-emotional well-being, which is impacted by the supports and safety of the surrounding environment.<sup>36</sup> In schools, teachers create the environments their students inhabit. Creating a positive learning space requires a complex set of skills that needs both study and practice before an individual should lead a classroom. Accordingly, several lessons for teacher quality, all of which require time to learn and master, form the underlying conceptual framework behind SC RISE's commitment to a schoolwide support focus for teacher residencies.<sup>37</sup> 1) Teachers must learn how to support a range of individuals in their classrooms; 2) Relationships are the most essential element in development and learning, so teachers need professional learning opportunities to develop the dispositions, socio-cultural knowledge, and self-awareness that put student relationships at the center of a classroom; 3) Learning processes rely on social, emotional, and academic brain functions; the different parts of the brain that control social, emotional, and cognitive processes work in concert to produce knowledge, so teachers need to learn how integrating social, emotional, and cognitive supports improves outcomes; and 4) Adversity affects learning, so educators must know how to mitigate the impacts of adversity on student learning. Figure 1 provides a visual of this integrated conceptual model, and the logic model (Required Attachments, Appx G.) outlines the key components of the conceptual framework for the project.

The first principle undergirding the conceptual framework is that time to learn how to teach matters. In fact, researchers have found that being fully certified to teach before being hired to lead a classroom is the single most important predictor of achievement in a school's control-excluding immutable qualities students bring with them such as socioeconomic status.<sup>38</sup> Learning to teach requires, as with any clinical practice profession, an opportunity to work and learn alongside an accomplished professional.<sup>39</sup> No dentist or nurse or architect or pharmacist practices independently before undergoing such an apprenticeship; teachers should also experience a clinical practice placement that does all it can to ensure they understand and can support students' full development. Since schools are organized around students' development over the course of a year, preparation should entail at least one year of work in a classroom, co-

teaching with a fully-credentialed, accomplished teacher, so that the aspiring teacher knows how to support students' engagement, attendance, and growth across the whole of a school year.

Figure 1: Integrated Model for SC RISE



Central to a successful residency is mentor quality. Studies show mentoring supports the development of skills and knowledge that empower new teachers to promote student academic achievement.<sup>40</sup> To ensure high-quality preservice mentoring, SC RISE will select teachers to serve as mentors whom school leaders and program faculty agree 1) Model excellence in teaching including use of effective instructional strategies for all students' differentiated needs; 2) Are fully certified; 3) Exhibit high expectations for students; 4) Effectively manage a classroom with positive behavioral interventions; 5) Communicate and work with parents well; and 6) Can commit to the time and effort needed to serve as a mentor teacher. CERRA will provide the mentors, as well as University faculty supervisors, with intensive Foundations in Mentoring training, developed in partnership with Winthrop University, including a new "addendum" training specifically for mentoring in residency programs.

The second principle undergirding SC RISE's conceptual framework understands schools to be the needed unit of change in systems work. Students generally attend the same schools for years in a row, and they need a consistently good climate and access to good teaching every year. Addressing the impacts of COVID-19 and their longstanding roots in underserved communities

will require the kind of transformation efforts that AIR's transformation framework has demonstrated can happen for whole schools. These school-based efforts, incorporating the kind of targeted supports and interventions that improve attendance, engagement, achievement, and other outcomes for high-need students, are central to SC RISE. Finally, because every student deserves equitable access to a well-prepared, stable workforce and to a supportive school in which to grow and learn, the project will use the insights to be gained from the implementation study to construct a statewide model for this work that can be adapted and adopted across the various geographic and demographic regions of the state.

## *B.2 Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes are Clearly Specified and Measurable*

SC RISE includes three goals and 7 program objectives with 27 associated key or direct project components leading to 9 measured program outcomes (Narr. App. J.5). Baselines and annual performance measures have also been determined (Narr. App. J.6.).

***Goal 1: Develop a whole school residency model for recruiting, preparing, and retaining teachers who have a positive impact on student learning.*** **Objective 1.1:** Strengthen mentor teacher capacities. **Components:** **1.1a:** Socialize National Boards Certification; **1.1b:** Provide supports for National Boards. **Outcome Measure 1.1:** By Year 5, 50% of mentor teachers have received or are pursuing NBCT status. **Objective 1.2:** Adoption of pre-service co-teaching. **Components:** **1.2a:** Statewide Train-the-Trainer workshops; **1.2b:** Local Foundations and Pairs trainings; **1.2c:** Support for use of key co-teaching models in residency classrooms. **Outcome Measure 1.2:** By Year 5, 85% of resident-mentor pairs will use high-leverage co-teaching strategies at least 15 hours a week. **Objective 1.3:** Increased match between PK-12 students and teacher demographics. **Components:** **1.3a:** Strengthen partnerships between HBCUs, community colleges, and preparation programs; **1.3b:** Recruitment of underrepresented populations into residency programs. **Outcome Measure 1.3:** By Year 5, the demographic match between new hires and middle school students will decrease by 15 percentage points. **Objective 1.4:** Increased retention of first- and second-year teachers. **Components:** **1.4a:** Selection of strong resident candidates; **1.4b:** Selection and training of mentors; **1.4c:** Integrated residency

program training with intentional field placements; **1.4d:** Induction supports. **Outcome Measures 1.4:** **1.4a:** By Year 5, SC RISE will have enrolled 192 new residency candidates; **1.4b:** By Year 5, first and second year same-school retention rates will be 81%.

***Goal 2: Provide PK-12 students with personalized support through a whole school model of teacher residency integration/utilization.*** **Objective 2.1:** Improved student attendance. **Components:** **2.1a:** Trauma Informed trainings; **2.1b:** Special Education trainings; **2.1c:** Strengthening student relationships trainings; **2.1d:** Coursework revisions to include more special education, relationship, and trauma-informed pedagogies; **2.1e:** Increased use of small group work with students; **2.1f:** Increased use of differentiated and personalized supports; **2.1g:** Increased positive interactions with families. **Outcome Measures 2.1:** By Year 5, chronic absence rates in SC RISE schools will be reduced to levels in the top quarter of district schools.

***Goal 3: Establish statewide practices and sustainable funding for teacher residencies.*** **Objective 3.1:** Create a shared policy framework for teacher residencies in South Carolina. **Components:** **3.1a:** Working group meetings; **3.1b:** Develop advanced mentor training for residencies; **3.1c:** Statewide convenings to workshop and adopt policy on residencies; **3.1d:** Exploratory cost study. **Outcome Measure 3.1:** By Year 3, the project will produce a white paper with policy options and a definition proposal. **Objective 3.2:** Increase local funding commitments for residents. **Components:** **3.2a:** Trainings on braided funding models; **3.2b:** Financial burden survey; **3.2c:** Budget revisions to provide funds for residents. **Outcome Measure 3.2:** By Year 5, residency schools will provide the equivalent of at least 40% of an FTE long-term substitute pay for residents.

### *B.3 Appropriateness to Address Identified Needs of the Target Population*

Paid co-teaching residencies are profoundly appropriate for the high-needs students the project will serve. SC RISE defines high-needs students as those attending schools that meet the 40% free or reduced lunch eligible benchmark for being a Title I school. Novice teachers cannot put a class on pause and leave the room to seek advice from a supervisor for how to address a

particular learning situation; residencies are designed with that reality in mind, providing co-placements with accomplished mentor teachers until aspiring educators have completed all credentialing work and demonstrated competence across all standards for performance necessary to ensure their readiness to practice. Known components of quality teacher preparation inform SC RISE's preparation design, as detailed in later sections of this proposal.<sup>41</sup> Residency curricula align with practice, a feature associated with stronger first-year performance.<sup>42</sup> Recruitment from local populations will attract historically underrepresented populations into school roles. Mentor teachers will possess the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to positively impact both student and resident learning and development. Residents will be selected for their match with districts and commitments to students and communities they will serve.<sup>43</sup> The co-teaching instructional intervention during the residency year is documented as effective, in particular for high-needs students.<sup>44</sup> Accordingly, PK-12 students not only will have better future teachers; they will benefit instructionally during the residency year. This preparation design is both appropriate and needed for the students that SC RISE will serve. Underprepared teachers are less likely to be able to meet students' learning needs, and they are a major driver of teacher turnover. SC RISE reverses the reality of the revolving door of underprepared teachers who serve in high-needs schools, improving PK-12 students' outcomes.

In addition, SC RISE incorporates additional student-level supports through the schoolwide integration/utilization of teacher residents as part of flexible staffing and team-based supports, enabling the targeted middle schools to provide more intensive, responsive, and sustaining interventions to support students in their ongoing developmental learning needs and recovery from the impacts of COVID-19. The project has incorporated professional development in three evidence-based interventions-trauma-informed instruction, special education Universal Design for Learning, and efforts to strengthen bonds and relationships with students-to help schools both to incorporate these effective practices and to maximize the benefits of having a cohort of residents in the school through flexible staffing and team-based structures so that more middle school students have the personalized supports they need to succeed.

### **C. Quality of Project Personnel**

Project personnel bring an exceptional commitment and set of expertise to SC RISE (Req. App. B.1). The CERRA team led the development of SC Mentor Training, were recognized by What Works SC for their facilitation of the SC Teaching Fellows Program, and lead new data collection efforts to understand more about leavers and stayers in the profession. Their network of stakeholders includes districts, IHE representatives, and policy makers. [REDACTED], the Executive Director and Primary Investigator (PI) for the project, is a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT), providing NBCT supports for over 14 years as well as serving as PI on CERRA grants since 2009. [REDACTED] is responsible for the overall success of the SC RISE implementation. She will lead a search for a Project Director (PD) with the experience and qualifications needed to lead and manage a complex, multi-year federal grant and knowledge of both school transformation and teacher preparation. The PD will be responsible for the day-to-day management of all aspects of SC RISE, leading and coordinating across workstreams, managing the support person for the project, and ensuring that evaluation lessons are incorporated into the project's continuous improvement efforts. The search for these positions will actively encourage applications from individuals who have traditionally been underrepresented by advertising positions in *Diverse Issues in Higher Education* as well as communicating with the state Association of Black School Educators and affiliated groups.

A Leadership Team (LT) will lead implementation of SC RISE activities ensuring alignment with the stated management plan and logic model. The LT will consist of the PD, CERRA Executive Director, IHE Liaisons, the *Prepared To Teach* Executive Director, and the external evaluator. Through virtual quarterly meetings and bi-annual convening, the LT will oversee the schoolwide residency model planning and execution; facilitate professional development activities; and engage in continuous monitoring of program goals and objectives. A larger Steering Committee (SC) will convene one or two times per year and includes LT members, deans, representatives from the state General Assembly, and additional partners representing diverse voices from partner schools/districts, HBCUs and community colleges, as discussed

earlier and documented in the partnership descriptions (Narr. App. J.3) and letters of commitments and sample MOUs (Req. App. C.2 & C.4). The SC will focus on studying the schoolwide residency model in terms of application, sustainability, and scalability.

#### *SC RISE Project Staff*

**Project Director:** SC RISE will hire a full-time project director to facilitate implementation including convening and leading the LT and SC. The PD will liaise with evaluators and track project activities aligning with the management plan and act as the main point of contact for IHE Liaisons. Housed at CERRA, the PD will supervise the support person and ensure accuracy of processes and records. Qualifications for the role include a record of school-university partnership engagement, at least three years' experience with teacher preparation, and a proven record of skilled communication and data-based decision-making. The Project Director will hold at least a Master's degree with a doctorate preferred or in process. **THE**

**Liaisons:** Faculty/staff leaders from each IHE will serve as site liaisons who participate in LT and SC meetings and monitor activity implementation at individual sites. Liaisons have knowledge of their preparation programs as well as experience in school-university partnership initiatives and are the main point of contact between school partners and the SC RISE LT.

**Project Administrative Support:** To ensure strong collaboration and communication, a part-time person (.75 FTE) will be hired to support the project. Housed at CERRA, the person will liaise with Winthrop University personnel and offices (budget, Records & Registration, etc.); manage scheduling and archiving minutes for project meetings; assist in travel activities; and manage fiscal duties. Qualifications include at least three years' administrative experience, highly professional communication, and at least an associate's degree.

Project collaborators include other IHE personnel (Req. App. B.2). Deans, all with years of experience in their institutions, have been integral partners in the planning of this project and will continue to serve on the SC to develop a coherent, statewide vision for schoolwide residencies. Other faculty also support program curriculum revision and recruitment, selection, and preparation of resident. Faculty experts in trauma-informed instruction, special education UDL,

and strengthening relationships with students and communities are identified to provide targeted professional learning opportunities for schools. Specific school and district participants will vary by partnership and will be determined during the planning year, ensuring that the professional learning opportunities are coordinated with school and district initiatives and their leaders. Identified districts have indicated their commitment to these efforts (Req. App. C.2).

Project consultants include [REDACTED], *Prepared To Teach's* Executive Director and founder. [REDACTED] leads work across the country around models for sustainably-funded teacher residencies. Her project will bring this expertise to workshops on school-based staffing flexibilities,<sup>45</sup> an exploratory cost analysis of SC RISE drawing on her CBCSE-trained cost-analysis work,<sup>46</sup> and a statewide survey on aspiring teachers' financial burdens to inform discussions of resident stipend levels.<sup>47</sup> [REDACTED] from St. Cloud State University and TWH Co-Teaching also will support the project as a consultant, bringing her two decades of research, practice, and training around pre-service co-teaching to the state through a Train-the-Trainer model that will allow South Carolina to build a cadre of certified trainers in pre-service co-teaching and construct a set of licensed materials for use across the state.

Finally, the evaluation team will be led by [REDACTED] at Basis Policy Research, an independent applied research firm that uses an iterative, learning-oriented, and field-informed approach to research and evaluation. [REDACTED] has successfully led several multi-year, federally funded research and program evaluations, including an EIR mid-phase grant, Regional Education Laboratory research studies, Teacher and School Leader Incentive grants, and Charter School Program grants. [REDACTED] and Basis will bring this federal grant experience to design and implement a comprehensive evaluation for the SC RISE program.

#### **D. Quality of the Management Plan**

SC RISE has a clearly delineated management plan with responsible parties to ensure the project can achieve its objectives and milestones, while also using collaborative approaches to achieving project goals (see Table 1). The project has two distinct phases, a planning phase in Year 1 and the annual implementation efforts that will continue through the grant award period



and beyond through the sustainability efforts incorporated into Goal 3. In addition to the project implementation management plan, SC RISE has all the capacities, through CERRA leadership, Winthrop University's systems, and the administrative support position to meet the reporting requirements for a federal EIR grant. Further, the required reporting activities will be the responsibility of grant and evaluation leadership, as applicable, and expected dissemination activities will have additional supports of *Prepared To Teach*, which is a national leader in curating and disseminating resources on sustainably funded residency designs and uses Creative Commons open licensing.

*Table 1: Goals, Activities, Timelines, and Responsible Parties*

Strategy/Activity Components (M)=Milestone; Annual Performance Targets in Narrative Appendix J.6	Year 1 (Planning)	Years 2-5	Individual Responsible	Other Collabo- rators
<b>Goal 1: Develop a whole school residency model for recruiting, preparing, and retaining teachers who have a positive impact on student learning.</b>				
<b>Strengthened mentor teacher capacities</b>				
Crosswalk current mentoring and resident support models with National Board Certification (M)	Summer		PD	IHEL, DL, SA
Develop NBCT SC RISE recruitment materials (M)	Fall		PD	PA
Socialize National Board Certification supports		Spring/Fall	PD	IHEL, DL, SA
Teachers engage supports for National Board Certification		Fall/Winter/ Spring	PD	IHEL, SA
<b>Adoption of pre-service co-teaching</b>				
Assess current co-teaching and staffing practices across schools (M)	Fall		PTT	IHEL, SA
Train-the-Trainer Co-Teaching Workshops (M)	Winter		TWH	IHEL, DL, SA
School-based workshops on staffing models that use distributed expertise (M)	Winter		PTT	IHEL, SA
Schedule for grade-level and classroom-level grouping and staffing (M)		Summer and fall	SA	IHEL
Local Co-Teaching Foundations and Pairs workshops (M)		Start of the school year	PD	IHEL, DL, SA

Support for use of key co-teaching models in residency classrooms		Ongoing	IHEL	SA
<b>Increased match between PK-12 students and teacher demographics</b>				
Develop community-based recruitment approaches (M)	Fall		PD	IHEL, DL, SC
Assess potential pool of candidates in classified positions in districts (M)	Winter		PD	DL
Strengthen partnership articulation and recruitment capacity between HBCUs, community colleges, and preparation programs in collaborating IHEs (M)	Fall and spring		PI	IHED, SC
Recruitment of underrepresented populations into residency programs		Ongoing	IHEL	PF, DL, SC
<b>Increased retention of first- and second-year teachers</b>				
Establish processes and criteria for mentor selection (M)	Winter		PD	IHEL, DL, SA
Establish selection processes and criteria for residents (M)	Winter		FD	PF, IHEL, DL, SA
Create plan for residency coursework integration into field placement (M)	Throughout 2025		PD	PF, IHEL, DL, SA
Selection and training of strong resident candidates		Spring, Summer	FD	PF, IHEL, DL, SA
Selection and training of mentors		Spring, Summer	PD	IHEL, DL, SA
Integrated residency program training with field placement		Ongoing	IHEL	SA
Induction supports		Ongoing from Year 3	PD	SA
<b>Goal 2: Provide PK-12 students with personalized support through a whole school model of teacher residency integration/utilization.</b>				
<b>Improved student attendance</b>				
Asset mapping and needs assessment (M)	Summer		PD	IHEL, SA
Coursework revisions to include more special education, relationship building, and trauma-informed pedagogies (M)	Summer		IHED	PF
Trauma Informed trainings (M)		Fall	FEI	IHEL, SA

Special Education trainings (M)		Fall	FE2	IHEL, SA
Strengthening student/family relationships trainings (M)		Fall	FE3	IHEL, SA
Increased use of small group work with students		Ongoing	MT	IHEL
Increased use of differentiated and personalized supports		Ongoing	MT	IHEL
Increased positive interactions with students and families		Ongoing	MT	IHEL
<b>Goal 3: Establish statewide practices and sustainable funding for teacher residencies.</b>				
<b>Create a shared policy framework for teacher residencies in South Carolina</b>				
Establish charge for and membership in Steering Committee (M)	Spring '25		PI	IHED, IHEL, DL, SC
Develop vision and initial plan for SC RISE policy framework (M)	25-26 academic year		PI	IHED, IHEL, DL, SC
Working group meetings		Ongoing as needed	PI	IHED, IHEL, DL, SC
Develop statewide advanced mentor training for residencies (M)		Year 3	PI	IHED, IHEL, DL
Statewide convenings to workshop and adopt policy on residencies		Quarterly, 2 in person	PI	IHED, IHEL, DL, SC
Exploratory cost study to inform sustainability (M)		Years 3 & 4	PTT	IHEL, DL
<b>Increased local funding commitments for residents</b>				
Assess current district budgets and school-based role use (M)	Summer through fall		PTT	DL, SA
Develop and vet SC RISE training materials (M)	Fall		PTT	SC, DL, SA
Trainings on braided funding models (M)	Winter		PTT	IHEL, DL, SA
Statewide financial burden survey of clinical practice candidates (M)		Year 2	PTT	IHED
Budget revisions to provide additional incentive funds for residents		Ongoing	SA	PTT
<b>Evaluation</b>				

Finalize evaluation plan, including IRB and U.S. Department of Education approval	Throughout 2025		Basis	PI, PD
Collect programmatic and researcher collected data		Years 2-5	Basis	PI, PD
Facilitate Discover Days		Biannually, Years 2-5	Basis	PI, PD
Analyze formative data and produce formative evaluation reports		Years 2-5	Basis	PI, PD
Analyze impact data and produce summative evaluation report		Year 5	Basis	PI, PD
Submit evaluation to WWC		Year 5	Basis	PI, PD

**Key:** PI= [REDACTED], CERRA Executive Director; PD=Project Director; IHEL=IHE Liaisons, IHED=IHE Deans/Assoc. Deans; DL=District Liaisons; SA=School Administrators; MT=Mentor Teachers; PF= IHE Program Faculty; FD= Field Office Directors; PA=Project Administrative Support; FET= Faculty Expert, [REDACTED], Columbia College; FE2=Faculty Expert [REDACTED], Columbia College; FE3=Faculty Expert, [REDACTED], Winthrop University; SC= Steering Committee; PTT = [REDACTED], Prepared To Teach; TWH= [REDACTED] TWH Co-Teaching; Basis=[REDACTED], Basis Policy Research

## E. Quality of the Project Evaluation

Basis Policy Research (Basis), an independent research firm with experience conducting large-scale evaluations of federally funded programs, will conduct a rigorous independent evaluation of the SC RISE project. The evaluation is designed to (1) assess the impact of a whole school model of teacher residency on student and teacher outcomes using a matched comparison quasi-experimental design (QED) that meets What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) evidence standards with reservations and (2) provide ongoing formative feedback through exploratory analyses and assessments of progress toward program objectives and goals that will facilitate data-informed continuous improvement of program practices. The mixed methods evaluation design will provide timely feedback to inform mid-grant adjustments and deliver annual results on SC RISE's impact and implementation. Narrative Appendix J.7 provides a timeline of the evaluation's data collection and reporting activities.

### E.1 Methods of Evaluation Meet WWC Standards with Reservations

Basis will use a matched comparison QED – using propensity score matching (PSM) to establish baseline equivalence and minimize bias and employing valid and reliable outcomes that are not overlapped with the intervention - to meet WWC evidence standards with reservations to assess the impact of the program on student and teacher outcomes<sup>48</sup>. The SC RISE

intervention is a whole school residency model where the school uses flexible student grouping and teacher staffing models to distribute expertise, a minimum of three residents are placed with mentor teachers in high-need middle schools for a pre-service year, and residents and mentors receive co-teaching, trauma informed, special education, and multilingual training. Comparison schools will receive business-as-usual training and support for novice and experienced teachers. The three impact research questions are aligned to goals and student and teacher outcomes in the SC RISE project logic model.

Impact and Moderator Research Questions	Data Sources
RQ1. What is the impact of the SC RISE whole school model on <u>schoolwide</u> academic achievement, attendance, and school climate? How do school characteristics moderate the impact?	School-level math and ELA test scores, daily attendance, and school climate survey data from 2025-26 to 2028-29
RQ2. What is the impact of SC RISE co-teaching classrooms on <u>student</u> academic achievement and attendance outcomes? How do student and/or teacher characteristics moderate the impact?	Student-level math and ELA test scores and attendance data from 2025-26 to 2028-29
RQ3. What is the impact of SC RISE on resident <u>teacher</u> retention? How do teacher characteristics moderate the impact?	Teacher assignment and administrative data from 2027-28 to 2028-29

Given the intent of the SC RISE model to make schoolwide improvements, we will first examine whether all students in SC RISE schools experience different schoolwide student academic, attendance, and school climate outcomes compared with all students in matched comparison middle schools. There is also a need to understand the effect on the students in co-teaching classrooms because a positive effect would show stakeholders that residency co-teaching experiences are valuable, not only to participating residents (and their mentor co-teachers), but also to the students they teach during the residency co-teaching year, thus encouraging sustainability. For this impact research question, we will examine whether students in SC RISE co-teaching classrooms experience different academic and attendance outcomes compared with matched students in comparison middle schools. Finally, we will examine differences in retention for resident teachers after their first year as teacher of record compared with a matched sample of novice teachers who went through different preparation pathways.

Basis will create three analytic samples using a two-step PSM to address the impact research questions. Step 1: (RQ1) estimate the probability of a South Carolina middle school participating in the SC RISE program within the IHE partner districts based on school-level student demographics (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, student mobility, English Learner, free- or reduced-price lunch, special education) and prior achievement; (RQ2) estimate the probability of a student in an IHE partner district being enrolled in an SC RISE co-teaching class based on grade level, student demographic characteristics, prior achievement, and school-level characteristics; and (RQ3) estimate the probability of a first year teacher of record being an SC RISE resident graduate based on teacher demographics. Step 2: use nearest neighbor matching to select control groups based on propensity scores closest to the treatment group, by research question. We will conduct baseline equivalence tests to construct treatment and control groups that differ by no more than 0.25 standard deviations on baseline characteristics, per WWC guidelines.

One threat to this study meeting WWC evidence standards with reservations is participant attrition. If the treatment participants who leave the study are different than control participants who leave in a manner related to outcomes of interest, then results will be biased such that differences in outcomes cannot be attributed solely to the intervention. Thus, we will heed WWC recommendations and examine two kinds of attrition - overall and differential - to determine if the characteristics of participants leaving the study introduce bias. Moreover, we will use conservative attrition standards to determine if differential attrition is considered "low" or "high." Basis will continually monitor attrition across groups and share results with SC RISE project leads as a means of providing formative feedback.

Basis conducted a power analysis using *PowerUp*<sup>49</sup> to estimate the minimum detectable effect size (MDES) that can be expected for the three research questions.<sup>50</sup> (RQ1) We use a 2-level cluster assignment and assume 8 SC RISE middle schools per year for three years with an average of student population of 350 students, 20% of variance in outcomes between schools, 70% of variance in level 1 outcomes explained by student covariates, and 15% of variance in level 2 outcomes explained by school covariates. The parameters will provide 80% power for

MDES of approximately 0.344. (RQ2) We use a 2-level cluster assignment and assume 3 SC RISE resident-mentor pairs per 8 schools per year for three years with an average of 25 students per classroom, 70% of variance in level 1 outcomes explained by student covariates, and 15% of variance in level 2 outcomes explained by teacher covariates. The parameters will provide 80% power for MDES of approximately 0.199. (RQ3) We use a 1-level assignment and assume a total of 24 SC RISE resident graduates per year for three years. The parameters will provide 80% power for MDES of approximately 0.333.

The outcome data for the impact study are objective and valid measures of academic performance, attendance, school climate, and teacher retention, which Basis will obtain from IHE partner district administrative data for the 2025-26 to 2028-29 school years. Analytic models for RQ1 and RQ2 will be random effects regressions that account for the nesting of data within schools and teachers, respectively, with year and grade fixed effects. The analytic model for RQ3 will be a logistic regression model with year and grade fixed effects. All models will include student-, teacher-, and school-level characteristics covariates, including baseline variables used in the PSM. To assess moderators, we will estimate separate models that incorporate treatment-by-moderator interaction terms by school, student, or teacher characteristics, based on the research question.

*E.2 Evaluation Methods Provide Performance Feedback & Progress Assessment*

The formative evaluation will assess progress toward program goals, objectives, and outcomes, as well as provide periodic performance feedback to project leaders to facilitate data-informed continuous improvement through regular collection of data during the grant years.

<b>Formative Research Questions</b>	<b>Data Sources</b>
RQ5. To what extent are the components of the SC RISE program implemented as intended? What factors impede or facilitate implementation?	SC RISE programmatic data, interviews with project leaders
RQ6. In what ways does SC RISE increase the match between teacher and student demographics?	District administrative data
RQ7. How do the SC RISE residents and mentors perceive the residency experience, co-teaching, trainings, and their ability to provide students with personalized support?	SC RISE programmatic data, evaluator surveys, focus groups, co-teaching log

RQ8. To what extent does SC RISE improve resident teacher self-efficacy?	CarolinaTIP TESS Survey
RQ9. Is variation in the implementation of components of the SC RISE program related to teacher and student performance?	SC RISE programmatic data, district administrative and achievement data

Basis will collect two categories of data for the formative evaluation: programmatic data and researcher collected data. Programmatic data will include all existing data sources collected by the SC RISE program, including participation, survey, and personnel data. Participation data will include but is not limited to residency program recruitment and selection procedures, residents' attendance at program events and trainings, resident classroom attendance, co-teaching logs, mentor attendance at training, and other available data indicating engagement in program activities. Survey data will include CarolinaTIP TESS Survey<sup>51</sup> data that participating IHEs annually administer to residents. Personnel data will include residents' application materials and mentor personnel history from district administrative data.

Researcher collected data will include surveys and focus groups with residents and mentors (see Narr. App. J.8-11 for instruments) and interviews with SC RISE project leadership. Surveys for residents and mentors will be administered twice per year to measure changes in perception over time. The resident survey will focus on perceptions on preparedness to teach and their ability to provide students with personalized support, including questions about planning and preparation, the classroom environment, classroom instruction, and professional responsibilities. The mentor survey will focus on perceptions of the residency program's support and training for mentors, mentors' perceptions of residents' preparedness to teach, and perceptions of their own ability to provide students with personalized support. A factor analysis will be completed after each administration to check for an internal consistency of .80 or higher. Survey items will measure change over time and inform program implementation. The survey will be administered electronically and in cooperation with the project team leads and school leaders. When convenient, the survey will be administered to a gathered group of residents and mentors to ensure a high response rate.



Basis will use annual focus groups with groups of residents and mentors to complement survey data. Resident and mentor focus groups will address two themes: *operational* and *social feasibility*. By *operational*, we mean the degree to which SC RISE training and support are meeting the needs of participants. *Social feasibility* refers to participants' responsiveness to or acceptance of SC RISE training, as well as careful consideration of the resources or supports needed to implement, refine, and sustain programmatic components. We will also use annual interviews with SC RISE project leadership to assess implementation of the components of the SC RISE program. We will systematically analyze the focus group and interview qualitative data using content analysis and employing the four practices of identification, coding, categorization in a matrix, and inductive analysis. These approaches will be applied to audio transcriptions and reviewed in a random order multiple times to minimize order bias. Findings will be grouped into common themes and featured in formative, implementation, and summative reports to highlight key celebrations, areas needing improvement, and areas requiring further study. When appropriate, reports will include representative, anonymized quotations from SC RISE program participants and leadership.

Basis will monitor implementation of SC RISE progress and report formative and summative data through the following deliverables: **Discover Days**. Basis will facilitate two Discover Days per grant year, providing a rich opportunity for partner engagement and understanding of formative and summative evaluation findings. Discover Days, a unique Basis approach, show promise in increasing partner efficacy and engagement while simultaneously cultivating trusting relationships. Typically held over one full day or two half days, partners spend time co-interpreting results and developing collective insights to inform on-going grant activities and evaluation efforts. **Interim Reports**. Basis will produce interim reports for Years 1-4. The interim reports will be organized by the evaluation questions and present data available through the reporting period. The reports will provide formative feedback to the SC RISE project team to inform programmatic decisions and federal reporting. **Summative Report**. Basis will produce a final report that captures the entire project scope. The report will be organized by

evaluation question, describing the fidelity of implementation, relationships between implementation and outcomes, implications for replication, and overall impact of the SC RISE project. Basis will submit the summative report to the SC RISE project team at the end of Year 5.

**WWC Reporting.** Basis will produce a report of the project's impact design methodology and results for WWC review and reporting. The WWC report will be completed at the end of Year 5.

### *E.3 Evaluation Plan Has Components, Mediators, Outcomes, and Thresholds*

The evaluation plan is aligned to the SC RISE logic model and will measure program components, mediators, and outcomes. The evaluation plan includes both impact and formative research designs to assess the impact of the program on student and teacher outcomes, evaluate the implementation of programmatic components, and explore mediating factors. To determine the extent to which SC RISE is implemented with fidelity, Basis will work with the project team during Discovery Days to define measures of adherence and exposure for key components of the SC RISE model outlined in the logic model and set levels for unacceptable, acceptable, and ideal implementation. For the mediator analyses, we will use multiple regression models to examine the relationship between levels of SC RISE implementation fidelity and teacher and student outcomes, testing for significant relationships and reporting on the strength and direction of the relationships between implementation and outcome measures. These analyses will provide correlational results regarding how levels of key SC RISE implementation components relate to outcomes and will allow us to explore whether different programmatic components are related to the effectiveness of the SC RISE model on student and teacher outcomes.

## Endnotes

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