



Great Public Schools
for Every Student

1201 16th Street, NW | Washington, DC 20036 | Phone: 202-833-4000

Rebecca S. Pringle
President

Princess R. Moss
Vice President

Noel Candelaria
Secretary-Treasurer

Kim A. Anderson
Executive Director

February 17, 2022

United States Congress
Washington, DC

Dear Senator/Representative:

On behalf of the 3 million members of the National Education Association, who teach and support students in 14,000 communities across America, I urge you to become a co-sponsor of the Teacher, Principal, and Leader Residency Access Act (S.3171/H.R. 3244).

We face an unprecedented shortage of educators. This shortage existed before the pandemic and has only intensified since it began. Teachers have had to work longer hours than ever and adjust to new models of teaching while also struggling to protect themselves and their loved ones. [According to a January survey of NEA members](#), 55 percent of educators are ready to leave the profession earlier than previously planned—a significant increase from August 2021, when 37 percent were thinking of leaving. A disproportionate number of those weighing their options are Black and Hispanic/Latino educators (62 percent and 59 percent, respectively), who are already under-represented in the profession.

Residency programs are one way of addressing this worsening crisis. However, the programs are typically unpaid, and students must continue to pay college tuition while participating in them. The **Teacher, Principal, and Leader Residency Access Act**, introduced by Sen. John Kennedy and Rep. Jason Crow, would expand Federal Work-Study funds to pay for a portion of the costs associated with residency programs, thereby broadening access to them.

Through residency programs, aspiring educators learn from actual classroom experiences that will prepare them to teach students and lead schools. The programs also help to reduce isolation new educators often feel by connecting them with experienced educators. Residencies are especially useful in recruiting and retaining more teachers and principals in rural communities; in schools with high needs due to a lack of resources; and in special education, bilingual education, and STEM subjects. Research suggests that residency programs cultivate greater gender and racial diversity and help reduce the overwhelming stress that prompts many early-career educators to leave the profession within the first five years. Studies consistently show that [70 to 80 percent of educators](#) who participate in residencies are still with their school districts after five years.

Residency programs are an important tool to provide all students with qualified, committed, and caring educators who feel supported in their work. We urge you to co-sponsor the Teacher, Principal, and Leader Residency Access Act.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan
Director of Government Relations
National Education Association