



Impact Report



**Teacher
Residency**
CLEMSON® UNIVERSITY

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Clemson University College of Education Teacher Residency Program is a bachelor's-to-master's degree pathway to teacher licensure in South Carolina. Students in the College's undergraduate degree programs in Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle Level and Secondary Education, Modern Languages and Special Education are eligible to apply for Teacher Residency in the spring semester of their junior year. In 2024, the program was able to accept 80 students, roughly 90 percent of all applicants, our largest cohort to date.

Clemson's teacher residents spend their fifth year in a local school district serving as a co-teacher while concurrently completing coursework to earn a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) and initial teacher certification. During their year-long clinical placements, teacher residents work alongside specially trained mentor teachers in the College's partner school districts. These mentor teachers are nominated by the school district personnel and are required to take graduate coursework in mentoring, instructional coaching, and co-teaching before working with the residents. The mentor teachers and teacher residents begin collaborating eight months prior to the year-long placement to ensure a strong working relationship is formed. Together, they begin co-planning for the upcoming school year. Most teacher residents are offered positions in their placement school districts upon graduation.



Kirstin Bull (right) meets her resident, Ellison Pruitt, during the Teacher Residency Match Day.

The program comes full circle

Kirstin Bull is a College of Education alumna who graduated from the residency program's first cohort and is now serving as a mentor teacher in the program.

“ I felt really prepared my first year even though my first year took place during the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic. My mentor continued to provide help and advice. There were challenges that were specific to certain students, and I had to work through some hard moments, but for the most part, I was on my feet and not drowning.”

Kirstin Bull '20
Mentor Teacher
Spearman Elementary

IMPACT OF TEACHER RESIDENCY IN SOUTH CAROLINA

The Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA) reported 51,000 certified teachers are needed to meet the educational needs of South Carolina alone. In 2022-2023, there were 7,352 teacher departures in the state, and only 2,892 graduates from South Carolina colleges and universities were eligible to teach, not nearly enough to address the state's teaching needs. The 2023-2024 school year started with more than 1,600 teacher vacancies in South Carolina, up from over 1,400 the year before. Nationwide, the data are similar and even worse in some locations, particularly rural and economically disadvantaged communities.

Over the past six years, 286 teacher residents have graduated from Clemson's Teacher Residency program and earned initial teacher certification; 98% of these residents accepted positions as teachers upon graduation. To date, graduates of the Teacher Residency program are employed in over 24 school districts across South Carolina.

In addition to adding nearly 300 well-qualified teachers to the state's teaching ranks, the College's Teacher Residency program has provided high-quality professional development to over 300 veteran teachers who have completed the required graduate coursework. Research shows mentor teachers who host teacher residents report improved job satisfaction, which leads to higher retention rates.

Clemson University distinguishes itself as a leader in teacher education

↑ 57%

Increase in enrollment in teacher education at Clemson University between 2014-2023

↓ 23%

Decrease in enrollment in teacher education in SC public and private institutions during the same period

The Clemson University College of Education is the **only public institution in South Carolina** to experience an increase in enrollment between 2014-2023.

The College's strategy has been to create as many innovative, flexible and accessible pathways to teacher certification as possible. Our Teacher Residency program, which started in 2017, is among our strategies for improving the recruitment and retention of well-prepared teachers in South Carolina. The program places residents in districts across the state, including Anderson 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, Darlington, Florence 1, Florence 3, Marion, Georgetown, Greenville, Pickens and Oconee school districts.

THE POTENTIAL ECONOMIC IMPACT IN SOUTH CAROLINA

The Learning Policy Institute (2017) estimates teacher turnover costs school districts between \$9,000 and \$21,000 per new hire. This includes expenses related to separation, recruitment, hiring, and training. These investments don't pay their full dividend when teachers leave after just a few years, which is too often the case. Of the teacher departures in South Carolina during the 2022-2023 academic year, 2,782 were teachers in their first five years of service. Clemson's Teacher Residency program is proud of its three-year year retention rate of 97%. With nearly 600 teacher residents and mentor teachers opting to stay in the field of education, one might conclude that a modest estimate of economic impact could be calculated by considering the savings to partner school districts, which would equal approximately \$6.8 - \$26.6M (adjusted for inflation).

Importantly, the College of Education's Teacher Residency program produces highly qualified teachers, an essential component for improving student learning outcomes and graduation rates. Public school graduates who are college and career ready, contribute a more competent workforce, and strong schools create strong communities – two critical factors that attract new businesses and families to South Carolina. An investment in the development of highly qualified teachers is essential to the health and vitality of South Carolina's economy and its citizens' quality of life. Clemson University College of Education transforms lives and communities through its award-winning teacher education programs, including Teacher Residency. Each year and across all its programs, the College graduates more than 300 students eligible for teacher certification in South Carolina.



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