GREAT Teacher Quality Partnership FAQ (10-16-19)

**Question:** What exactly are we committing to do as a district when we agree to support a resident in the GREAT program?

**Answer:** In return for getting an outstanding middle school STEM teacher, your district will:
- Provide the resident with health benefits during the year-long residency.
- Publicize the residency opportunity on your district website and by other means, working with us to recruit and select highly-qualified individuals.
- Identify a district liaison to work with SREB and GCSU on all program-related issues.
- Recommend a highly effective mentor teacher to work with each resident. Allow that mentor release time for training (two days) and respect the time of that mentor teacher in working with their resident.
- Upon successful completion of the residency, place the resident as a first-year teacher-of-record in a middle school in the district.
- Support and follow-through on a two-year induction process following the residency.
- Share state testing data necessary for program evaluation and accountability.

**Question:** We understand that the GREAT residency program is a partnership between SREB, GCSU, and Georgia districts. What are the respective roles of the different members of the partnership, and what does the timeline look like for the first cohort?

**Answer:** The table below provides a summary of the various roles and responsibilities of the partners for the first cohort. The timeline for the second and third cohorts is similar, pushed back one and two years respectively.

**Roles and Responsibilities in the GREAT Program**

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<th>2019-20</th>
<th>2020-21</th>
<th>2021-22</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SREB</strong></td>
<td>Select residents paired with mentors (with GCSU)</td>
<td>Weekly instructional coaching (onsite and virtual)</td>
<td>Provide continued coaching during induction</td>
<td>Provide continued coaching during induction</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Provide training for mentors</td>
<td>Provide resident stipend</td>
<td>Provide mentor stipend</td>
<td>Provide training for mentors</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GCSU</strong></td>
<td>Select residents paired with mentors (with SREB)</td>
<td>Deliver 36-credit online MAT program leading to certification</td>
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<td>Develop computer science curriculum</td>
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<td>2019-20</td>
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<td>District</td>
<td>Identify possible mentor teachers</td>
<td>Provide the resident health benefits</td>
<td>Hire resident as full-time teacher</td>
<td>Provide an induction program to support the new teacher</td>
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<td>Agree to sponsor residents</td>
<td>Respect and protect mentor-resident partnership by allowing release time for training, time for planning, etc.</td>
<td>Provide an induction program to support the new teacher</td>
<td>Provide evaluator math and science assessment data</td>
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<td>Apply to GCSU MAT program by March 15</td>
<td>Attend SREB Making Schools Work conference in July</td>
<td>Serve as full-time middle school STEM teacher for the district</td>
<td>Serve as full-time middle school STEM teacher for the district [plus at least one additional year beyond this]</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Begin MAT program in May or June</td>
<td>Serve as resident teacher in classroom under guidance of mentor teacher</td>
<td>Complete MAT program</td>
<td>Meet all requirements for certification</td>
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**Question:** How do we know the resident won’t back out of teaching, or decide to go and teach in another district?

**Answer:** On entering the program all residents must sign a binding contract agreeing to repay the stipend they receive during their residency if they do not follow through on their commitment to teaching for your district for at least three years after completing their residency. They will have skin in the game, just like all of the other partners.

But before it ever comes to that we hope to use the screening process to find candidates who will persist in teaching, and then prepare them so that they have the tools and training to succeed and thrive in the classroom. One of the tools we will use in screening candidates is the Gallup Teacher Insight – a screening tool that has been shown to be successful in identifying successful teachers in Georgia. In the interviews one of the criteria the selection committee will consider is “goodness of fit”: we want to find a resident who we think will be happy teaching in your district, not some generic district.

Research by Linda Darling-Hammond has also shown that teachers prepared in residency programs are more likely to succeed and persist as teachers. Finally, the induction support provided by your district and by SREB’s instructional coaches will help these teachers in the difficult early years in the profession.

We cannot know for certain that a resident will still be teaching in your district four years from now, but we have deliberately designed the program to maximize the chances that that will be the case.
Question: What if we don’t have an opening in our district when the resident finishes the program and is ready to be hired?

Answer: As the sponsor of the resident your district will have the first option to hire them as a teacher. However, if you do not have any appropriate openings, you may release them from their commitment to your district so that they can pursue employment in other districts in Georgia.

Question: If we don’t believe that a resident meets our expectations or needs do we still have to hire them?

Answer: No, absolutely not. If we see that a resident is struggling we will assign additional SREB instructional coaching support and work with that candidate to turn things around. Our goal is that by the end of the residency you will want to hire the resident as a teacher, but a district is under no obligation to hire a resident who has not been successful.

Question: You mentioned an induction program. What do we have to do for that?

Answer: Beginning in Year 1 of the grant SREB and GCSU will work with partner districts to develop an induction framework and materials that can be used by all partnering districts for the induction of all new teachers, not just those who were residents. Districts that already have strong and well-resourced induction programs do not have to modify what they are already doing, but induction frameworks and materials developed for GREAT will be freely shared with all partners. The grant provides resources so that SREB coaches will also continue to meet with former residents six times per year during the induction period to help them continue to develop their teaching practices. One of the expectations and goals of the TQP program is to increase district capacity for teacher induction, and an expectation is that districts participating in the program will continue teacher induction programs beyond the period of the federal grant. This is in districts’ own best interests, as well-supported teacher induction is a best practice that reduces teacher turnover and improves teacher efficacy.

Question: Who can become a resident in this program?

Answer: Per the federal grant requirements, all residents must be either a recent graduate with a bachelor’s degree in a STEM subject, or a mid-career professional who has had a successful career in a STEM field. In addition, to be accepted into the MAT program at GCSU candidates must have had an undergraduate GPA of 2.75 or higher.

Beyond those requirements the selection committee will be looking for the best candidates (based on resumes, transcripts, application essays, interviews, and the Gallup Teacher Insight), the best fits (roots in the community), and the best mentor-resident combinations.

Question: How does an applicant apply to become a resident in this program?

Answer: Interested parties should apply to the Master of Arts in Teaching in Middle Grades (https://www.gcsu.edu/education/teached/middle-grades-education-mat) program of study at GCSU. The online graduate application may be accessed at https://www.gcsu.edu/future-students/graduate/graduate-online-application. Applicants should specify in their application letter that they are applying to be a part of the Georgia Residency for Educating Amazing
Teachers (GREAT) program. In addition to all other GCSU application requirements, applicants for GREAT will need to complete the Gallup Teacher Insight assessment (applicants will be sent instructions for doing so), and will be interviewed by a selection committee. Applicants should aim to have all application materials received by the GCSU admissions office no later than March 15, 2019.

**Question:** Can a resident apply to the program without specifying the district in which they are willing to complete a residency?

**Answer:** Yes. We expect that while some applicants will have a strong preference for a particular district due to having roots in the community, we also expect that we will have highly qualified applicants who are open to serving as a resident in multiple districts.

**Question:** Can someone who is already teaching in our district under a provisional license become a resident in this program?

**Answer:** We believe that the answer to this is “yes,” but we will be asking for clarification from our federal program officer. It may complicate their employment status, as they would be going from an employee to a student-teaching role. They would go from being a teacher-of-record to having the status of a student teacher, so they would actually have less independent authority and would require more oversight; the district would essentially lose a teaching position, although we hope that in the long-term the district would benefit from a teacher who is better prepared. The resident’s stipend is that of a first-year teacher, so from a financial point-of-view it would be roughly the same.

**Question:** Who can be/should be a mentor for a resident?

**Answer:** Placing each resident with an outstanding mentor teacher will be critical to the overall success of the program. Districts and school principals will play a key role in selecting appropriate mentors, based on the following criteria:

1. Strong content knowledge in appropriate STEM subjects.
2. Demonstrated excellence in instruction.
4. A proven reputation for effective collaboration.
5. A strong desire to develop and coach new teachers.
6. A strong growth mindset, and willingness to release teaching responsibility to the resident.
7. Ability to clearly identify and explain elements of effective teaching.
8. Being a strong professional role model.

In addition to their salary mentors in the GREAT program will receive a $2500 stipend. Mentors will receive two days of training on mentoring for the program, and during the residency will receive support from SREB’s instructional coaches. Mentors will be chosen for their excellence as instructors, but must be willing to gradually and appropriately turn control of their classroom over to the resident as the resident develops their own capacity. For the residency to be successful “the training wheels have to come off,” and mentors (and their principals) have to be okay with that.
It is important that principals understand and protect the mentor-resident partnerships, and not assign duties or expectations to either the mentor or the resident to the detriment of the residency purpose of developing a future teacher.