

BEI YEAR 8 APPLICATION FOR NEW APPLICANTS

Describe how BEI funds will strengthen your program's efforts to recruit, prepare, and retain educators who reflect the students and communities you serve.

Include:

- Your key program priorities for the upcoming year
- How BEI funds will support those priorities
- Which activities are new versus expansions of existing efforts
- Any relevant data or early indicators (e.g., applications, enrollment, projected outcomes)

Where possible, reference recent trends in applications, enrollment, and completion. **(400 words)**

The IGNITE Teacher Residency Program is committed to recruiting, preparing, and retaining highly effective educators who reflect the students and communities of DeKalb County School District. As we enter our next phase of implementation, our focus is on strengthening the full educator pipeline from entry into the profession through the critical first years of teaching.

Our key priorities for the upcoming year are to launch a comprehensive post residency support model, expand our focus on resilience and wellness, and strengthen GACE support to ensure certification success. Over the past two years, we have refined a residency year experience aligned to IGNITE's mission and vision and are now intentionally extending that work beyond the residency year.

Please describe how your program defines "historically underserved or underrepresented".

Identify the groups included in this definition and explain how this reflects the communities your residents are preparing to serve. **(200 words)**

IGNITE defines "historically underserved or underrepresented" as individuals from communities of color - particularly Black, Latino, and other racially marginalized groups - who face systemic barriers to entering and completing teacher preparation programs. These barriers may include financial hardship, limited access to test preparation resources, lack of professional networks, and underrepresentation in university-based teacher education pipelines.

This definition is not theoretical for us - it is reflected in who we recruit and who we serve. In our upcoming cohort, over 95% of residents are people of color. Many are DCSD alumni or currently reside in Dekalb County - individuals already embedded in the communities they will serve. We draw these candidates in deliberately because proximity to community is an asset, not an afterthought.

The students of DCSD are predominantly Black and Brown, and research consistently shows that students benefit academically, socially, and emotionally from seeing themselves represented in their teachers. We also recognize the research around mirrors, windows, and sliding doors, and prioritize mentor teachers of color, as they are especially beneficial to the development and retention of residents of color.

By recruiting educators who share the lived experiences and community ties of their students, IGNITE is building a sustainable, community-rooted teacher pipeline.

What data sources (e.g., Residency Year Experience Survey, resident or graduate feedback, internal program data) do you currently use or plan to use to inform program improvement? How will these data inform your priorities and use of BEI funds? **(200 words)**

IGNITE draws from various data sources to drive continuous program improvement. Through the NCTR Residency Experience Surveys, we gather feedback from current residents, alumni, mentor teachers, and training academy principals. This provides a comprehensive, multi-perspective view of program effectiveness.

Internally, we administer surveys at the conclusion of all professional learning sessions, including our eight Bridge Weeks, for both residents and mentor teachers, capturing real-time feedback and addressing immediate needs. We also survey both groups at the close of the Resident Summer Experience and the Summer Mentor Training to assess their preparation and readiness entering the school year. Lastly, we survey program alumni to understand their ongoing needs as early-career teachers, helping us identify gaps in our post-completion support.

These data sources directly inform our priorities for BEI funding, which will focus on two areas: alleviating financial burdens for current residents and launching meaningful alumni support for the first time in our program's history. Cohorts 1 and 2 received limited post-completion support - BEI funds will begin to change that. For current residents, planned investments include emergency funds, testing/licensure fees, graduation regalia, meals during Bridge Weeks, and support for wellness. These targeted supports respond directly to what our data tells us residents need most to complete the program and thrive beyond it.

What systems and staff will be involved in your grant management process (i.e., specific budgeting tools and processes, examples of other grants your program currently manages, etc.)?
(200 words)

Grant management for the IGNITE Teacher Residency Program is supported through a collaborative structure that includes the IGNITE leadership team, DeKalb County School District Human Resources, the Finance Department, and the Grants and Partnerships Department. The Director oversees implementation and ensures alignment between grant priorities and program outcomes, working closely with the Finance Department and HR Budget Analyst to monitor expenditures and maintain fiscal accountability.

The district utilizes established financial systems and processes to manage funds, including internal budgeting tools, purchase order protocols, and monthly reconciliation practices. All expenditures follow district procurement guidelines, including approval workflows and documentation requirements to ensure compliance and transparency.

Programmatically, the IGNITE team is responsible for tracking progress toward grant deliverables, including recruitment, preparation, and retention metrics. Key indicators such as application volume, enrollment, certification passage rates, and retention outcomes are regularly monitored to ensure alignment with grant goals.

While BEI would represent a new funding stream for IGNITE, the program operates within a large urban school district that manages multiple state and federally funded initiatives. This infrastructure provides strong systems of support and oversight, ensuring effective grant management and successful implementation.

Having reviewed the guidelines for [BEI Evaluation](#), can you confirm that:

- You will be able to submit all of the required program and outcome-related data for grant evaluation,
- NCTR can survey all teacher residents, mentor teachers, graduates, and principals who have hosted and/or hired residents and graduates (i.e., NCTR's Residency Experience Surveys), and you will be able to provide the necessary contact information for NCTR to do so (i.e., names and email addresses for participants).
- NCTR can also contact these individuals to participate in an interview or focus group.

If no to any of the above, please share more information in the appropriate space provided below.

