

YEAR-LONG RESIDENCY — KEY TAKEAWAYS

Living that Teacher Life · 2026 Arkansas Department of Education Summit · Dr. Matthew Sutherlin, Director of Educator Preparation & Licensure

THE BIG IDEA

The first year of teaching shouldn't be the first time someone teaches. A year-long residency is an immersive, full-school-year clinical experience — an aspiring educator is paired with a trained mentor and lives the full rhythm of the school year before taking a classroom alone. It turns the day-one “cliff” into a “cushion.”

WHAT THE MODEL IS

- **Full-year placement** — one classroom, one community, not a single semester.
- **Co-teaching with a mentor** — a trained mentor models, then shares, the work.
- **Gradual release** — responsibility grows from observe to co-teach to lead.
- **Coursework + practice** — theory is applied the same week it's learned.
- **Embedded coaching** — regular feedback cycles drive deliberate growth.
- **Stipend support** — pay where possible keeps the pathway accessible.

A YEAR IN THE LIFE

- **Summer** — onboard & match: mentor pairing, classroom setup, shared vision.
- **Fall** — observe → co-teach: learn the students, build routines, share instruction.
- **Winter** — lead with coaching: own planning and data; lead with a coach close by.
- **Spring** — lead & launch: full lead teaching; finish hire-ready for day one.

GRADUAL RELEASE

- **I do** — the mentor models and thinks aloud; the resident observes.
- **We do** — mentor and resident co-teach with shared decisions.
- **You do together** — resident leads while the mentor coaches close by.
- **You do** — resident owns planning and teaching; coaching continues.

BUILT TO THE STATE APPROVAL/REVIEW RUBRIC

- **Clinical supervisor** — trained, credentialed, in classrooms often; 8+ observation cycles.
- **Experienced mentor teacher** — Lead/Master educator, protected time, ideally one resident.
- **Time requirements** — a true two-semester, near-daily clinical placement.
- **Residency handbook** — one clear guide, shared with every partner a month early.
- **Quality of experience** — gradual release to the whole job, taught on HQIM.
- **EPP-K-12 partnership** — a real MOU: resourced, accountable, and data-driven.

DOCUMENT THE CLINICAL WORK

- The EPP keeps dated evidence of co-teaching, co-planning, observations, and coaching sessions.
- Feedback is anchored to the Aspiring Teacher Rubric; coaching stays non-judgmental and separate from sign-off.
- “No surprises”: progress is shared before every assessment checkpoint.

WHY IT WORKS

- Confidence built on a full year of real practice, not a pep talk.
- Effectiveness from week one — routines, data-driven planning, and differentiation are rehearsed all year.
- Students get two capable adults in the room and a teacher who already knows them by August.

WHERE TO NEXT

- **1. Invest in mentors** — select, train, give time, and compensate the people who carry the model.
- **2. Protect opportunities** — Aspiring Teacher Permits keep the pathway open to the candidates we need.
- **3. Align the coursework** — sequence the prep program to the residency year, not the other way around.
- **4. Measure what matters** — use competencies, coaching, and outcomes — not just clock hours.
- **5. Start small, then scale** — prove it with one strong cohort and grow what works.

When the first year isn't the first time, everyone wins. · Questions & discussion:

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