IES Institute of Education Sciences

STUDY SNAPSHOT
December 2022

Regional Educational Laboratory Southwest
At American Institutes for Research

The Louisiana Believe and Prepare Educator Preparation Reform: Findings from the Pilot and Early Implementation Years

Believe and Prepare is a teacher preparation reform implemented by the Louisiana Department of Education in collaboration with school systems and teacher preparation programs across the state. It was piloted in the 2014/15 school year and became mandatory in July 2018 for incoming teacher candidates in all 18 institutions of higher education that offer traditional teacher preparation programs.[1] The reform focused on competency-based curricula, extended clinical experiences, and rigorous mentor teacher training.[2] A central requirement of the reform is that teacher candidates must participate in a yearlong residency with a mentor teacher. This replaced the prior shorter-term student teaching requirement, typically six weeks.

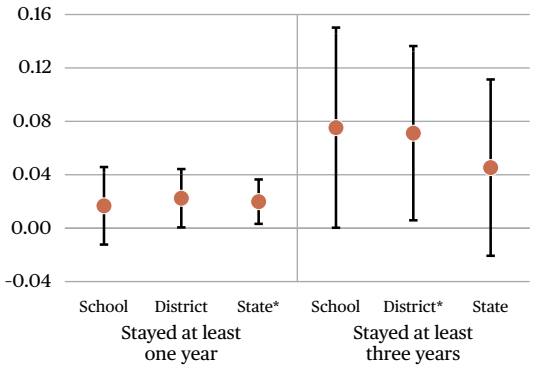
The Regional Educational Laboratory Southwest Teacher Preparation and Professional Development Partnership conducted this study to inform the Louisiana Department of Education, the Louisiana Board of Regents, and teacher preparation programs about the extent to which Believe and Prepare has led to improvements in teacher and student outcomes for early career teachers. The study used administrative records on undergraduate teacher candidates provided by the Louisiana Department of Education to compare the outcomes between similar teachers who completed programs that had implemented Believe and Prepare and teachers who completed programs that had not implemented it.

Key findings

- Teachers who completed a preparation program that had implemented Believe and Prepare were 2 percentage points more likely than teachers who completed other programs to remain teaching in Louisiana for at least one year and 7 percentage points more likely to stay in the same school district for at least three years (see figure).
- Grade 4–8 students whose teachers completed a preparation program that had implemented Believe and Prepare did not score significantly differently on math tests but scored lower on English language arts tests than students whose teachers completed other programs. However, these results are based on small samples and should be interpreted with caution.
- Other teacher outcomes such as in-service performance ratings, competency as measured by Praxis II scores, school placement, and job assignment were not statistically different between teachers who completed a preparation program that had implemented Believe and Prepare and teachers who completed other programs.

Retention rates were higher among teachers who completed a program that had implemented Believe and Prepare

Estimated difference in probability of retention



* Significant at $p < .05$.

Note: Each dot represents the estimated difference in probability of retention (in the same school, district, or state) between teachers who completed a program that had implemented Believe and Prepare and teachers who completed a program that had not implemented it. The vertical lines above and below each dot represent the likely range of the estimated difference 95 percent of the time.

Source: Authors' analysis based on data provided by the Louisiana Department of Education.

1. Although Believe and Prepare became mandatory in July 2018, programs had several years to implement the requirements, and implementation timing varied across institutions and across programs within the same institution (described in more detail in the full report).
2. Hannan, M. Q., Hamilton, L. S., & Kaufman, J. H. (2019). Raising the bar for teacher preparation: Early signals on how Louisiana's education policy strategies are working across the state. RAND Corporation. https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR2300/RR2303z3/RAND_RR2303z3.pdf.