

All In on Quality Preparation in Texas

An Analysis & Recommendations
for Implementing House Bill 2

September 2026



Texas is addressing its decades-long teacher workforce crisis with urgency and intention.

Texas' [House Bill 2 \(HB 2\)](#) commits more than \$400 million annually to teacher preparation and certification through the [Preparing and Retaining Educators through Partnerships Program \(PREP\) Allotment](#) – a new funding entitlement for districts and educator-preparation programs (EPPs). The investment comes with updated policies and guidance for the field including upskilling the incumbent workforce, reducing schools' reliance on uncertified teachers, incentivizing the use of state-adopted curriculum, and attaching accountability and outcomes measures to the investment.



The state is all in on making high-quality pathways into teaching more accessible. During the 2025–2026 school year, [47%](#) of newly hired Texas teachers entered the classroom without certification. That figure reflects a reordering of how people become teachers: a decade ago, candidates generally completed preparation before being hired; today, districts facing vacancies increasingly hire first and support certification afterward. HB 2 is a bet that this sequence can be reversed. By investing in high-quality preparation, the state can produce teachers who are effective sooner, [more likely to stay](#), and produce stronger [student outcomes](#).

Texas researchers have found that students [lose](#) roughly four months of learning in reading and three months in math when taught by an uncertified teacher; this loss is compounded when students are taught by an uncertified teacher for two or more consecutive years. This loss is [felt more acutely](#) in secondary math and science courses, career-technical education, elementary classrooms, and rural communities. Texas' [2024 National Assessment of Educational Progress \(NAEP\) results](#) further illustrate this learning loss, where just 40% of 4th graders demonstrated proficiency in math and 30% in reading, rates that decline to 27% in math and 29% in reading for 8th graders – contributing to an overall decline in Texas' national standing.

HB 2 was designed to tackle these challenges at scale, and its success hinges on effective implementation. To help communities fully capitalize on the state's investment, EPPs need and want to play a larger, more central role in the state's implementation efforts.

What We Did: HB 2 Implementation Survey

In spring 2026, Deans for Impact (DFI) surveyed executive leaders of Texas EPPs to better understand how they are experiencing and responding to policy changes and opportunities within HB 2.

SNAPSHOT OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

28

Texas EPPs

13 of 20

Education Service
Center (ESC) regions
represented

40%

of Texas' newly certified
teachers are prepared
by respondents

100%

intend to pursue PREP-
funded pathways

In total, 28 Texas EPPs responded. This group is representative of all Texas pathways into teaching (e.g., university-based traditional, online alternative certification, district-led, etc.) and draws from 13 of the state's 20 ESC regions. Together respondents are responsible for preparing approximately 40% of Texas' [newly certified teachers](#). **Every respondent said they intend to pursue PREP-funded pathways, and most are already taking steps to do so.** As one EPP leader put it, the incentive the state has designed addresses real challenges EPPs and aspiring teachers face, including the cost of high-quality preparation:

"One of the things I would certainly want the state to know is how grateful we are for their investment, that we don't take that investment and that commitment lightly. It is substantial, it is game changing, and the students across Texas, the kids in K-12 schools, need and deserve that investment into the future of the teaching workforce across Texas."

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In addition to the survey, DFI conducted semi-structured interviews with EPP leaders who completed the survey, held two focus groups with Texas teacher-educators with expertise in [literacy](#) and [math](#), and conducted visits to four EPPs in the state to interview faculty, school leaders, and future teachers, and conduct coursework and classroom observations. We are grateful to local EPP leaders who engaged with us in one or more of these activities, providing deep insight into what it takes to translate policy into improved opportunities for teachers and students, and for the generous support of the Houston Endowment in making this report possible. To support communities in fully leveraging Texas' historic investment in quality preparation, state, philanthropic, and advocacy leaders are urged to act on the following key insights and recommendations.



HB 2 Implementation Survey Findings

- #1** EPPs are moving quickly to create PREP pathways but are not confident they can meet the state's implementation timeline.
- #2** The most significant implementation challenge for EPPs is the required content integration.
- #3** The two-year lag in funding creates immediate capacity constraints, especially for EPPs with fewer resources and those in rural communities.
- #4** EPPs and districts are deepening existing partnerships rather than forming new ones, which may disadvantage smaller and rural systems.

FINDING #1

EPPs are moving quickly to create PREP pathways but are not confident they can meet the state's implementation timeline.

Although 100% of survey respondents intend to pursue PREP-funded pathways, and 66% are already taking steps to do so, ***less than 20% of EPPs are confident they can implement the [full set of requirements](#)*** (e.g., content integration, different requirements across PREP pathways, partnership governance, data and reporting, etc.). This isn't for lack of will; it's a matter of timeline and capacity constraints:

"There are a lot of balls in the air right now, and there will be a lot of things that come together in what feels like a very short amount of time. So there's a definite risk of things feeling rushed or not quite ready or not even sure what's expected, and some fear of messing things up."

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Nevertheless, EPPs are motivated by the significant funding incentives available to be shared between districts and EPPs (see [Figure 1](#)). They are also committed to responding to the needs of their district partners:

"I've talked to a lot of different district partners who've asked, 'Do you offer a residency program?' We have to. That's what our districts want."

TEXAS EPP LEADER

FIGURE 1

PREP Allotment fiscal summary	
Pathway	Allotment per teacher candidate
PREP Grow Your Own (GYO)	\$8,000 – \$12,000
PREP Preservice Residency	\$24,000 – \$39,500
PREP Traditional & Alternative Preservice	\$10,000 – \$21,500
PREP Mentorship	\$3,000

- The allotment per teacher candidate is shared between districts and EPPs. See the Texas Education Agency (TEA)'s [PREP Guidebook](#) for more information.
- Allotments are determined by a formula that includes weights for rural and high-needs school settings, multipliers based on pathway, and a bonus for bilingual and special education certifications.
- Each PREP pathway has a cap on the number of candidates supported per district, with some flexibilities for districts that wish to reallocate.

Source: [Maximizing the PREP Allotment](#), Educate Texas

Furthermore, only one respondent indicated that they had a “very strong” understanding of the current requirements for PREP-funded pathways (see [Figure 2](#)). To address this lack of understanding, DFI, fellow advocacy organizations, and technical assistance partners, as well as local philanthropy, are playing a critical role. Sixty percent of survey respondents identified expert facilitated networked learning opportunities like communities of practice as the form of support they view as most valuable. Respondents named that spaces such as these would allow for collaboratively solving implementation challenges, as well as receiving ongoing coaching support. Nearly all regions in Texas – from Houston to the Permian Basin – identified communities of practice as their most desired form of support.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Publish and highlight vetted exemplars of strong implementation practices (e.g., strong memoranda of understanding (MOUs), budget calculators, course sequences for Academies).
- Fund regional communities of practice that allow EPPs and district partners to internalize state policy and guidance, address common challenges, and highlight early signs of progress.

FIGURE 2 • HB 2 IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

	2025–2026	2026–2027	2027–2028	2028–2029
PREP Route Approval	Late June/July: Intent to Apply Launches	July 2027: Approval for 27–28 SY	July 2028: Approval for 28–29 SY	Full approvals via continuing approval
Training Content	August–October: General Screener + Reading Academies Screener December: Training Begins	Program leaders/faculty/staff pursuing PREP complete training + plan for initial content integration	P-ALT + PREP Trad implementation; Residency Pilot	All PREP Routes implement training content for all candidates in required certification areas
Mentor Training			Mentor training required for PREP routes	
PREP Route Implementation			All approved programs eligible to implement for one year	All programs eligible to implement through full approval or as long ongoing eligibility is met
District Funding		Initial allotment payments begin (October 2026 FSP payment) for residents entered in ECOS by Aug. 2026	Remaining success-based payment as residents attain the Enhanced Standard certificate	All PREP-funded pathways eligible for success-based funding
EPP Funding			EPPs eligible to receive funding based on Reading & Math Academies completion	First success-based funding flows to EPPs based on PREP Residency completion requirements

Source: HB 2 PREP Allotment Requirements: EPP Content & Training Requirements ([video](#)), Texas Education Agency, June 2026

FINDING #2

The most significant implementation challenge for EPPs is the required content integration.

More than 70% of survey respondents identified required content integration as one of their top three implementation challenges, the most frequently cited of any option. EPPs with PREP pathways must integrate content developed by TEA into coursework for candidates in those pathways. The Texas Reading Academies are already in use statewide; the Texas Mathematics Academies are in pilot, with full rollout to take place over the 2027–28 school year. Both address the science of learning and high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) (see Figure 3).



FIGURE 3 · REQUIRED ACADEMY CONTENT BY CERTIFICATION PATHWAY

Certification Pathways Outside of EC-6	EC-6 Certification	EC-6 Biliteracy Certification
1 Course: Science of Learning Foundations* (~45 hours) *Embedded with HQIM Foundations & Research-Based Instructional Strategies (RBIS)	3 Courses + Science of Learning: 2 English Language Arts and Reading (ELAR) Texas Reading Academies* (~90 hours) 1 Texas Mathematics Academies* (~45 hours) - Science of Learning Foundations (~10 hours) *Embedded with HQIM Foundations & RBIS	3 Courses + Science of Learning: 2 Biliteracy Texas Reading Academies* (~90 hours) 1 Texas Mathematics Academies* (~45 hours) - Science of Learning Foundations (~10 hours) *Embedded with HQIM Foundations & RBIS

Source: HB 2 PREP Allotment Requirements: EPP Content & Training Requirements (video), TEA, June 2026

EPPs that successfully implement this content will be eligible to receive an additional \$1,500 per candidate for completing the required content. In exploring what makes this the most pressing implementation challenge for EPPs, we identified three primary themes from survey responses:

1 Strong implementation takes time, but final rules, guidance, and content are not yet available.

"The short timelines, required content, and multiple changes all at once are legitimate implementation challenges. Results will take time and should be gauged as such. Incremental progress is key."

2 Redesigning candidate learning experiences is complex and requires significant capacity to map what competencies and skills are taking place across existing courses, create a plan for replacing it with Academy content, and align course revisions with meaningful field and clinical experiences.

"The content integration is a heavy lift in conjunction with existing curricular offerings – we don't have 'room' to simply insert the equivalent of two new courses and already face limitations for how many students take and where to fit things in. We offer a robust series of pathways, which makes full implementation across all pathways a complex task."

3 EPPs' participation in policy governing PREP pathway implementation decisions will sharpen and accelerate implementation. Multiple respondents named concerns about EPPs not feeling like they have been a part of the process.

"I would encourage leaders to gather more direct input from practitioners on the implementation challenges tied to HB 2 and similar policies, including staffing capacity, time demands, and unintended consequences for student learning."

As the state and advocates work to further build the capacity of EPPs to be prepared to implement Academy content, they should be clear and consistent in articulating the goal of the Academies (see **Figure 4**).

FIGURE 4 · STATED GOALS FOR ACADEMIES INTEGRATION

- **Ensure consistency, quality, and outcomes across program types.** A floor-setting move in a state with more EPPs than any other state, each of widely varying capacity.
- **Eliminate training redundancies and lighten the load on first-year teachers.** Currently, teachers seeking EC-3 and EC-6 certification already need to pass the Science of Teaching Reading exam and then complete the Reading Academies training during their first years in the classroom. By integrating the Academies into teacher preparation, this removes a major training burden early in K-3 teachers' careers, reducing turnover risk at a time when they are most vulnerable to leaving.
- **Directly fund state professional learning priorities.** This integration shifts training costs from district professional development budgets to a dedicated state funding commitment for initial preparation.
- **Align candidate learning with district expectations and student needs.** Mandating certification for teacher-educators on Academy content establishes unified alignment and shared language across all individuals involved in educator preparation.

The concerns voiced by respondents are solvable, and the state has taken important steps. For example, the state is partnering with DFI on an independent and external review process for both Reading and Math Academies, facilitating committees of Texas EPP faculty and national content experts to provide feedback on the material before it is released.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Clearly and consistently articulate the goal of the Academies.
- Proactively communicate projected timelines, including any changes, related to content integration, and guidance for work EPPs should undertake ahead of having access to the content.
- Fund technical assistance for EPPs committed to implementing required content to integrate with support and intention.
- Establish a standing advisory committee of EPP leaders to inform future policymaking, technical guidance, and implementation monitoring.

FINDING #3

The two-year lag in funding creates immediate capacity constraints, especially for EPPs with fewer resources and those in rural communities.

Nearly 50% of survey respondents named the funding timeline as one of their top three concerns. HB 2 introduces a success-based funding approach for EPPs. EPPs earn their funding based on individual candidates completing required Academy content, earning certification, and completing a full year of classroom teaching, meaning eligible EPPs will first receive funding in the 2028–2029 school year.

"We're implementing a model that we won't see the financial return on investment for at least two years. So how do we build that capacity now without the resources that we'll have later to help sustain it?"

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For EPPs, the significant investments in staffing capacity they need to make these shifts must be made now, but they won't realize any success-based funding for two years, which may be challenging for EPPs who don't have the resources to invest those dollars in advance. While new for most EPPs, success-based funding has produced [strong outcomes](#) for [community colleges](#), which shifted state funding away from enrollment to student outcomes, including credentials of value, transfer to four-year institutions, and meaningful dual credit completion. As this funding structure is piloted more broadly, including with EPPs, state leaders should be mindful and responsive to the capacity trade-offs communities will have to make.



One leader illustrated why additional positions are required to support a PREP Preservice Residency pathway by sharing:

"With the number of candidates we have and the new requirements for how many observations or walkthroughs or conferences – all of those touchpoints during that process – we will have over 6,000 touchpoints that have to be intentional, they have to be planned, they have to be documented, they have to be put into our accountability system, because we will then report those to the state as part of that success-based model."

TEXAS EPP LEADER

(See [Appendix A](#) for breakdown of how the 6,000 touchpoints estimate was reached.)

Multiple respondents named that the touchpoints themselves are actually quite valuable, and that the upfront investment will pay dividends if executed with intention early in the process.

"Once you have the structures in place, the allotment and the way it works are going to create a sustainable model for your residency program. You have to just invest upfront, but once you do that, it'll be sustainable."

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Each of these touchpoints (e.g., required observations, conferences, and check-ins) also has documentation, data entry, follow-up communication, and accountability system reporting requirements in the Texas Administrative Code.

Given the additional capacity required through a PREP Residency model, EPPs will likely need to hire additional site coordinators or administrative staff. Leveraging existing information about residency models in Texas, typical salaries and benefits for site coordinator roles, and assuming there will be at least 2,500 residents per year in PREP Residency pathways, **we estimate the upfront investment to EPPs statewide to \$7.3 million per year, or \$14.5 million over the two-year gap** (see [Appendix B](#) for full breakdown of cost estimate). However, under those same assumptions, **we conservatively estimate that EPPs statewide stand to receive \$17.25 million per cohort**, illustrating the clear sustainability of the policy over the long term. Other PREP programs (i.e., Traditional, Alternative, GYO, and Mentorship) will require similar upfront investments.



Several EPPs are now working with local philanthropy to fund additional positions during this transition period to meet the additional capacity required to meet PREP pathway requirements; however, not all EPPs have access to local philanthropy with a history of funding staff positions.

Another concern respondents shared was that the element of success-based funding tied to first-year teacher retention felt out of their locus of control. Forty-six percent of respondents named “school system capacity” as a primary concern, placing it as the second most significant implementation challenge on the survey. Those who identified this concern felt that funding based on new teacher retention was primarily a district responsibility. While this is a valid concern, it represents an opportunity to shift mindsets at EPPs by supporting leaders to think about the longevity and retention of their graduates as a critical success metric.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Reduce the documentation burden through state-supported data infrastructure rather than program-by-program systems.
- Create bridge or planning funding for the period between when capacity investments must be made and success-based funding is realized. This might be accomplished by allowing EPPs and school systems to agree locally to provide a portion of available PREP implementation funding to the EPP partner during the residency year, with the amount reconciled against the EPP’s subsequent PREP revenue where permissible.
- Incentivize districts to leverage PREP Mentorship funding to support mentoring and induction programs with their EPP partners, an evidence-based approach to improving new teacher retention.

FINDING #4

EPPs and districts are deepening existing partnerships rather than forming new ones, which may disadvantage smaller and rural systems.

Nearly half of survey respondents shared they were participating in Learning Acceleration Support Opportunities (LASO) Cycle 4 agreements. TEA additionally reports that there were [over 500](#) first-time PREP Allotment applications submitted, and [56 EPPs](#) were approved to offer the Residency route as of April 2026.

Despite the significant interest in PREP pathway partnerships, only 25% of EPPs shared that they are forming new partnerships with school districts. This may not be about willingness, but rather due to factors such as geographic proximity and district capacity. For example, many EPPs have a maximum radius for how far they allow their candidates to drive for field experiences. Additionally, given that 46% of respondents named “school system capacity” as a primary concern, EPPs may be more inclined to solely partner with districts with whom they have an established relationship.

Despite the PREP Allotment's additional \$4,000–\$12,000 funding for districts that are designated as rural or high-needs, through our conversations across the state we repeatedly hear that smaller and rural school districts are worried that the governance requirements in a PREP pathway partnership disadvantage them compared to larger urban and suburban districts. One EPP leader also named that while they intentionally work with rural districts, it takes an additional lift, especially in recruiting and training high-quality mentors:

"We work with not only urban districts, but we also work with rural districts, which is going to be even a heavier lift in terms of finding high quality mentors. We're starting to think strategically about advocating for some regional type of work in those areas."

TEXAS EPP LEADER

ON THE GROUND WITH EPPS

Sam Houston State University and the University of Texas at El Paso have intentionally included rural and smaller districts in their PREP pathway partnerships. During our learning visits to these and other EPPs, leaders shared that regional networks, collaborative infrastructure, and time to build trusting systems were critical:



"A larger district that has been doing the work for some time – another smaller district new to the work was saying, 'Well, how do you do this?' And the larger district was like, 'Oh, this is how you do it in A, B, and C.' 'Are you willing to share?' 'Sure, let me send you what we have.' That to me was the true value of partnership, and I had not seen that before."

Explore deeper insights on HB 2 implementation in Houston in our story, [Making quality accessible: how Houston teacher pathways are responding to new HB 2 funding.](#)

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Support regional structures so small and rural districts aren't structurally excluded.
- Address the rural mentor supply constraint directly by creating inter-district regional mentor pools.
- Identify and close preparation deserts. TEA should map PREP-approved programs against district location and pathway type to identify regions where districts have no viable partner within reasonable distance. This analysis would let the state target partnership brokering, technical assistance, and incentives where supply is thinnest.

Conclusion

Communities need time and capacity to fully leverage HB 2 and the PREP Allotment to bolster the educator workforce and student outcomes. Texas has committed a significant and reliable investment to teacher preparation, and our survey contains strong evidence that the field sees this investment as an opportunity. But a sustained commitment to getting implementation right is critical to the state's success. Our analysis indicates leaders of EPPs are not asking for relief from HB 2's requirements. HB 2 signals important opportunities to provide timely and impactful support.

"It will take years for us to really see the cumulative effect of that investment. So part of the ask is to be patient with that, and to look for those success stories, and to think about what does success look like – how do we know what that return on investment is, and are we measuring that appropriately?"

TEXAS EPP LEADER

HB 2 is the first time Texas has made funding for preparation an entitlement rather than time-bound grants, something programs can build against rather than focus on reapplying for. That permanence is what makes the current moment worth getting right. The field is all in, and the bet is a good one. What remains is making sure the right supports come at the right time.



About Deans for Impact (DFI)

DFI is a national non-profit organization committed to ensuring that every child is taught by a well-prepared teacher. DFI supports educator-preparation programs to bring the science of learning into teaching practice; partners with policymakers to ensure pathways into teaching are instructionally-focused, practice-based, accessible, and innovative and responsive; and equips leaders with the tools to address today's most pressing challenges in educator preparation. Guided by principles of learning science, DFI aims to help aspiring and early-career teachers create rigorous and affirming classrooms where all children thrive. deansforimpact.org.

Breakdown of touchpoints required tied to PREP Residency pathway

The table below breaks down how many touchpoints would be required for each resident in a PREP Preservice Residency pathway ([19 TAC Chapter 228, Subchapter F](#)). For an EPP serving over 160 residents, the 36 touchpoints per candidate would result in the approximately 6,000 total touchpoints named above.

Touchpoint Type	Frequency	Annual Count
Field supervisor observations of resident (formal)	2 per semester	4
Field supervisor observations of resident (informal)	4 per semester	8
Field supervisor & campus supervisor conferences	3 per semester	6
Field supervisor & host teacher check-ins	2 per month	18
Total touchpoints per resident		36
<i>Total residents</i>		166
Total annual touchpoints		5,976

Model for upfront costs to Texas EPPs associated with PREP Residency prior to success-based funding repayment

EPPs must staff residency supervision beginning in SY2026–27 but receive no success-based funding until SY2028–29. This appendix estimates the size of that gap. However, as a result of HB 2’s success-based funding model, we estimate that, once revenue is flowing, **every \$1 invested in PREP Residencies returns \$2.38 to EPPs.**

These are transition costs, not permanent cost increases. The steady-state operating difference for even large residencies can be less than \$100,000 per program, and reallocating existing positions can improve efficiencies to bring down administrative costs. What follows is the necessary bridge to that steady state.

THE TWO-YEAR GAP, IN DOLLARS

Statewide annual upfront investment from EPPs (pre-revenue period)	\$7.3M
Cumulative two-year upfront investment from EPPs (pre-revenue period)	\$14.5M
Eventual EPP revenue per annual cohort	\$17.25M
Revenue as share of net-new cost	238%

ASSUMPTIONS

Estimated Residents Statewide, SY26–27	2,000	TEA shares that approximately 1,500 PREP Residents are enrolled in ECOS for Fall 2026, with an additional 500 expected to enroll in Spring 2027.
Recommended Site Coordinator FTE	114	
Site coordinator salary + benefits (1 FTE)	\$84,500	\$65,000 salary + 30% benefits, based on current Texas EPP job postings
Share of FTE on residency during transition	100%	Assumption: Site coordinators in PREP residencies are dedicated positions carrying no teaching load.
Residents per coordinator	17.5	One full-time clinical faculty member per cohort of 17–20 residents
Cost per resident	\$4,829	
Less: prior adjunct supervision cost	\$1,200	Estimated contract payment from local education agency (LEA) to EPP per resident under TCLAS agreement
Net-new cost per resident	\$3,629	

CURRENT PREP RESIDENCY PARTICIPATION

Estimated Annual Residents prior to PREP	~650/year	TCLAS funded 85 district-EPP partnerships and 2,000 paid resident placements, 2021–2024
Estimated Residents Statewide, SY26–27	2,000	TEA shares that approximately 1,500 PREP Residents are enrolled in ECOS for Fall 2026, with an additional 500 expected to enroll in Spring 2027.
School districts providing PREP Residency	~300	September 2026 data from TEA
EPPs with residency partnerships	54	56 EPPs are approved to provide PREP Residencies, and 54 have LASO Cycle 4 partnerships

PATHWAY TO OFFSETTING PRE-REVENUE EXPOSURE

Residents expected to trigger EPP payment	1,500	Based on an analysis of current certification and first-year retention rates of Texas teachers across all licensure types, we conservatively estimate 75% of PREP residents will meet all requirements. Requires Enhanced Standard certification and a full year as teacher of record
EPP revenue per completer	\$11,500	\$10,000 base + \$1,500 Academies completion
Years until EPP success-based funding arrives	2	Resident begins SY26–27, certifies, completes first year as teacher of record SY27–28

WHAT THIS ESTIMATE LEAVES OUT

This model only includes direct costs associated with funding positions to operate PREP Residency pathways. It does not include program and operating costs (e.g., mileage reimbursement, conferences, technology, supplies).