

Education Week

100,000 New Teachers for California?

By Lesli A. Maxwell

August 19, 2009

California's budget is busted and school districts have had to let teachers go, but that's not keeping a new organization from pledging to deliver a bevy of new teacher talent to the state's public schools over the next 11 years.

Today, an informal network of folks who oversee 70 separate alternative teacher certification programs around the state are launching a formal membership organization that aims to find top-notch professional people who want a second career in the classroom.

Called the [California Teacher Corps](#), the organization has one particularly lofty goal: grooming 100,000 new teachers and placing them in classrooms by 2020. That's a big number, even by California standards.

The group particularly wants to help cultivate new teaching talent in the state's rural and urban pockets where school district leaders struggle most with recruitment, hiring, and retention.

"Our primary goal is to recruit the best and the brightest teachers," said Catherine Kearney, the president of the newly-formed Corps. "We think by working together in a formal way we can really begin to address teacher preparation issues in California including the critical need for special education, science, and math teachers."

By pooling resources in a formal organization, Ms. Kearney said, the Corps hopes to reach smart, motivated professionals who may not have considered teaching. "We want the pathway to be wide open," she said. Most of the alternative programs are affiliated with colleges and universities though a handful of county offices of education and charter management organizations have their own accredited programs.

Ms. Kearney said that more than half of the graduates in the state's alternative certification programs are ethnic or racial minorities and that participants in the programs are overwhelmingly drawn to a second career in teaching by social justice motives.

While teachers have lost jobs this year because of the state's fiscal crisis, a wave of teacher retirements is expected in the coming years, some 8,000 annually, according to a [report](#) last year by [WestEd](#).

"We really think this is the time to be proactive," Ms. Kearney said.