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## Career changing teachers are in high demand

**BY Lyanne Melendez**  
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BERKELEY, Calif. (KGO) -- In this tough economy, there's one group of teachers in great demand -- those who specialize in math and science. As baby boomers retire, California will need more than 30,000 teachers in those two fields over the next 10 years.

Helen Chen has worked in retail and at a consulting firm. Now she hopes her financial background will help her become a good math teacher.

"I really want to open up opportunities to all sorts of students realizing math is not just math, but it flows into science, it flows into engineering and so many other subjects. You really need math as a strong foundation," said Chen.

Her training starts in the classroom with one month of intensive preparation under the Aspire Teacher Residency Program. These new teachers will then spend one year shadowing a veteran teacher at one of the 30 Aspire public schools operating in low-income communities in California, while working on their credentials and master's degrees. Katie Kelly was attracted to this program and moved here from Boston a month ago.

"When I applied to this program, I knew I wanted to teach and I applied and said I would almost be equally happy to teach social studies or biology and I had a hunch that they might take a bite at the biology because I know that science teachers are high in demand," said Kelly.

She will now help teach high school science in the fall.

"Especially in the middle school and the high schools, we have a high demand for highly qualified teachers who understand the subject and also understand how to teach it well," said program coordinator Jeff Starr.

The Obama administration has called on non-profits like Aspire to recruit and prepare more science, technology, engineering and math teachers in public schools.

Another organization, the California Teacher Corps, has already placed 1,200 math and science teachers in public schools throughout California. Now, the non-profit has vowed to place another 2,500 by 2015.

Still, despite these efforts, the state is expected to fall short of meeting the demand for math and science teachers.

That's why schools are eager to attract more career changers like Chen.

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