

Teacher Corps Announces Placement of 1,300 Teachers

BY Mira Browne

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The California Teacher Corps was established to meet the future demand for teachers in the state's public schools through alternative certification. It has placed approximately 1,300 math and science teachers in California's high-need schools between the 2008 and 2010 school years, according to figures from the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. The Teacher Corps also experienced a steady increase in the percentage of math and science teachers pursuing their credential through an alternative route to certification program, for the first time surpassing the 50 percent mark in 2009-10.

California faces a critical shortage of math and science teachers, both in urban communities and the state's more rural districts. According to a 2007 report by Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning (CFTL), due to attrition and retirements, California needs 33,000 math and science over the next decade. The report also anticipated that the state would fall short of meeting this need by 30 percent. Additionally, in a later report, CFTL states that in California, 12 percent of math teachers, 18 percent of physical science teachers and 11 percent of life science teachers are teaching outside their fields of expertise, making the shortage even more critical.

To stem this tide, the Teacher Corps is focusing its recruitment efforts on filling California's talent pipeline with second-career professionals and industry experts from the math and science fields. Teacher Corps programs recruit highly skilled subject-matter experts and place them in high-need public schools. In past years, as much as 50 percent of California's new math teachers were placed from Teacher Corps programs.

"Teacher Corps programs across the state have focused their recruitment initiatives on bringing industry experts and second-career professionals into the teaching profession in order to meet California's urgent need for math and science teachers," said Catherine Kearney, founding president of the California Teacher Corps. "President Obama called on teacher preparation programs to recruit 100,000 new STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) teachers over the next decade. The California Teacher Corps has made progress and is taking further steps today to respond to the President's call, as well as to ensure that our students have access to talented teachers who can impart the skills they need to be successful in our 21st century global economy."

While the state struggles with a shortage of math and science teachers, at the same time, 75 percent of the 50 fastest growing occupations in California require STEM skills, according to

California's Employment Development Department. Nationwide, in just 10 years, there will be more than 120 million high-paying, high-skill jobs in the U.S., but only 50 million Americans qualified for these positions.

“We must support collaborations that attract, prepare and retain quality STEM teachers to ensure our future educational and economic leadership in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields,” said Judy Corcillo, executive director of the National Association for Alternative Certification (NAAC), of which the Teacher Corps is an affiliate. “The California Teacher Corps is a model for how states can recruit and prepare highly effective teachers in the STEM fields. We must continue to tap the growing pool of career-changers with postsecondary degrees in mathematics and science to fill these high-need teaching positions, especially as research shows teachers with degrees in science and math are more likely to positively impact student achievement in STEM classes. ”

Teacher Corps programs have historically met the varying needs of public schools. Over the past seven years, Teacher Corps programs have placed more than 55,000 highly-qualified teachers in California public schools.

For more information, visit the California Teacher Corps at www.cateachercorps.org.