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CALIFORNIA TEACHER CORPS PROVIDING PINK-SLIPPED EDUCATORS RETRAINING TO SHIFT TO HIGH-NEED TEACHING POSITIONS

*Special Education Teachers in Demand; Alternative Certification Programs
Successfully Placed 3,500 New Special Education Teachers Last Year Alone*

Sacramento, CA – To ensure that effective teachers remain in the profession, the California Teacher Corps, the statewide organization representing alternative certification programs, today announced that its programs are reaching out to school districts to provide pink-slipped and laid-off teachers retraining to move into the high-need field of special education. The announcement follows the state’s notification in March, when more than 26,000 teachers received notices of potential lay-offs.

Alternative certification programs will work closely with school districts to offer many of these teachers continued opportunities within the teaching profession, including accelerated programs for general education teachers to become credentialed in special education. Last year alone, alternative certification programs placed 3,500 teachers, many of whom were initially pink-slipped, and then retrained into special education teaching positions.

In the midst of the state budget crisis, California is experiencing a critical shortage of qualified special education teachers to serve the nearly 680,000 special education students enrolled in public schools. School districts are pursuing retraining options through alternative certification programs to fill this shortage with pink-slipped general education teachers. For example, through California State University’s San Bernardino alternative certification program, approximately 50 percent of its new special education teachers were pink-slipped general education teachers. Also, last year in San Joaquin County, 31 special education teaching positions were filled by pink-slipped general education teachers who were retrained by the Teachers College of San Joaquin.

“The California Teacher Corps is taking bold action to ensure that talented teachers are able to remain in the profession,” said California Teacher Corps President Catherine Kearney. “By retraining teachers to shift to the in-demand field of special education, we are giving them the opportunity to continue to teach, while serving the students who need them the most. The Teacher Corps also recognizes that school districts are searching for solutions in these difficult

budgetary times, and we look forward to working with school districts across the state to help provide an alternative to losing their best teachers.”

"It is tragic to see so many talented and enthusiastic beginning teachers handed pink slips due to the state budget crisis, and it has a chilling effect on our teacher pipeline," said California Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell. "Fortunately, the California Teacher Corps is helping to keep effective teachers in the classroom, and address California's special education teacher shortage. The California Teacher Corps is an important partner in our effort to improve student achievement for all students and close the achievement gap."

Alternative certification programs have the ability to create an expedient pathway for fully-credentialed teachers to become retrained and shift to the special education field. Building on a teacher's established experience in the classroom, enhanced training includes coursework on behavior management, best practices in working with students with disabilities, special education law, collaborating with para-educators in the classroom, as well as coaching and support from veteran educators and mentors. Teachers are immediately placed into the classroom where they are needed while they concurrently earn their special education credential. The retraining option allows many teachers to remain teaching in the same school district, and oftentimes, in the same school where they previously taught.

"If not for California State University's alternative certification program in San Bernardino, I would not be teaching today," said Special Education Teacher Shannon Rochelle Garibay. "I am forever grateful that I was able to remain in the field that I love by shifting to special education. Formerly a fifth grade elementary school teacher, I am now making a real difference in the classroom by serving students who are most in need of a caring and qualified teacher. I also know that by obtaining a second credential in special education, I am today a better teacher."

Alternative certification programs in California have historically met the varying needs of public schools, including attracting talented individuals and second-career professionals who bring with them deep content expertise and professional experience. In addition to special education, last year, more than half of all new math teachers were placed from alternative certification programs. Over the past six years, alternative certification programs have placed more than 50,000 highly-qualified teachers in California public schools.

About the California Teacher Corps

The California Teacher Corps is a nonprofit organization established in 2009 with the goal of placing 100,000 highly-qualified teachers in California's communities by 2020. The CA Teacher Corps provides a unified voice for the state's alternative certification programs, effectively and proactively addresses teacher preparation issues facing California and recruits the best and the brightest professionals to teach in the public schools that need them most. CA Teacher Corps membership trains second-career teachers, and others committed to working in hard-to-staff schools, who have deep subject-area expertise and who remain in the teaching profession. For more information, visit the California Teacher Corps at www.cateachercorps.org.

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