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CALIFORNIA TEACHER CORPS PROGRAMS MEETING CRITICAL NEED IDENTIFIED IN CFTL REPORT

Alternative Certification Programs Are Expanding the Teacher Pipeline by Recruiting, Training and Supporting Teachers with Real-world Experience

Sacramento, CA – California’s more than 70 alternative certification programs are placing highly-qualified teachers who bring with them a wealth of professional experience and established career-expertise to the classroom, a critical need identified by the Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning (CFTL) in its report on the status of the teaching profession released today. However, while teachers from alternative certification programs are helping to meet this critical need, the CFTL goes on to mischaracterize teachers who are currently in an alternative certification program as “underprepared” and unqualified to teach in California’s highest-need communities.

Alternative certification programs attract second-career professionals, and other established individuals committed to teaching in hard-to-staff public schools. These teachers are able to apply real-world experiences to the classroom, increasing student’s critical thinking and ultimately student achievement.

“More teachers than ever before are pursuing an alternate route into classroom,” said Catherine Kearney, president of the California Teacher Corps. “California’s alternative certification programs are recruiting and training talented, established professionals to meet the demands and realities of the 21st Century. Alternative certification candidates are mature, have a strong desire to serve their community, bring with them career-expertise and have the ability to immediately take charge of a classroom. Our programs are producing teachers with exceptional knowledge in their key subjects and first-rate teaching skills, and who are committed to raising student achievement by choosing to teach in the public schools who need them. We share a similar mission with the CFTL, which is to ensure that all students have access to talented, committed and qualified teachers. Teachers who pursue an alternate route into the classroom are these teachers.”

Teachers who pursue an alternate route into the classroom need to demonstrate deep content and subject-area expertise prior to being accepted into an alternative certification program. Like all new teachers in California, prior to ever entering a classroom, teachers enrolled in alternative certification programs must demonstrate competency in their subject-matter and pass the state-approved CBEST test.

In addition to obtaining at least a bachelor's degree, alternative certification candidates are required to complete an additional full semester's worth of instruction before entering the classroom, including pedagogy, classroom management, lesson design and English language learner instruction. Additional coursework continues concurrent to teaching in the classroom. As part of ongoing professional development and training, teachers in alternative certification programs are mentored throughout the duration of the program by veteran educators.

The rigorous requirements of alternative certification programs have led to several positive outcomes for the teaching profession, especially for public schools in California's underserved communities. First, teachers from alternative certification programs are demonstrating longer retention rates than those from traditional programs. According to the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC), at a time when one in three teachers leave the teaching profession within five years, 80 percent of teachers from alternative certification programs are still teaching after five years.

Secondly, a recent survey by the CCTC found high satisfaction rates amongst the principals who hire them. Over 90 percent of school principals across California ranked teachers from alternative certification programs as good or better than other beginning teachers, notably in the area of planning and instruction (92.1%). The survey also found that nearly 95 percent of principals would hire additional teachers from alternative certification programs.

Third, alternative route programs attract talented individuals who bring with them deep content expertise and professional experience. Last year, half of California's new math teachers were came from alternative certification programs. As California faces a critical shortage of math, science and special education teachers, alternative certification programs are recruiting qualified teachers for these in-demand subject areas.

Finally, research shows that these teachers work in the communities in which they are from, choose to be placed in hard-to-staff schools, and are committed to improving student achievement.

"Teachers who pursue an alternate route into the classroom are doing so to serve their communities," continued Kearney. "California is going to face historic challenges as nearly 8,000 teachers begin to retire annually over the coming years. To strengthen public education and

provide all students with well-qualified and talented teachers, California must continue to promote, as well as support, multiple pathways into the teaching profession, including alternative certification programs.”

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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