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ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION ROUTE PROVES CRUCIAL FOR CALIFORNIA’S TEACHER SHORTAGE

California Teacher Corps fills gap with teachers across state, especially in high-need communities

SACRAMENTO – As school districts throughout the country and especially in California face a massive teacher shortage and scramble to recruit teachers for the fall, [California Teacher Corps—the statewide organization providing a unified voice for the more than 100 alternative certification programs in the state](#)—is certifying teachers by the thousands. Enrollment in California teacher training programs is [down 53 percent in the last five years](#) and the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing issued [30 percent fewer teaching credentials](#) in 2013-2014 compared to four years ago. With about one third of teachers retiring, California will need [more than 100,000 teachers](#) in the next 10 years.

Alternative credentialing courses have prepared more than 60,000 teachers, showing the appeal of the opportunity for professionals to switch to teaching mid-career. Teacher Corps also has a strong track record of teacher retention, with more than 70 percent of Teacher Corps teachers still on the job five years after they become credentialed. This is compared to a national average of between [40 and 50 percent retention in five years](#), costing school districts [roughly \\$2.2 billion](#) per year to deal with this turnover. Furthermore, over 50 percent of Teacher Corps programs directly serve rural, high-needs schools that often have the most trouble finding credentialed teachers.

Going hand-in-hand with the teacher shortage is the fact that the few teachers left in California’s classrooms do not reflect the students they teach. In California, [73 percent of students are non-white while only 29 percent of teachers are non-white, and 27 percent of teachers are men versus 51 percent of students being male](#). Yet in 2012-13, [73 percent of those who entered teacher credentialing programs in California were female and 51 percent were white](#). However, half of Teacher Corps teachers are ethnically diverse and a full one-third of Teacher Corps interns in special education and elementary programs are men.

Shia Smith, who trained through a Teacher Corps’ program, teaches high school English and world cultures at the Phillips Academy in Alameda, where all of the students have special needs. Coming from a nonprofit, writing and theater background, Smith became a teacher later in her career. An alternative certification program made her work with students with learning disabilities possible.

“Earning my teacher certification while interning was the only way that I could become a teacher and do what I love,” said Smith. “Financially supporting my family in this career transition made my dreams a reality and I am so thankful that now I get to teach my students every day.”

Teacher Corps' programs allow a much-needed pathway for many like Shia to become teachers, who otherwise would have been unable to do so through traditional teacher preparation programs.

“Our alternative certification programs can help to fill the gap in qualified teachers in California, thus providing a better future for our students and state as a whole,” Said California Teacher Corps President Patricia Pernin.

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 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. California 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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