

**TEACH FOR AMERICA’S ROLE IN EFFECTIVE EDUCATOR DEVELOPMENT:  
IDENTIFYING, RECRUITING, AND PREPARING HIGHLY EFFECTIVE  
TEACHERS TO SERVE HIGH-NEED STUDENTS**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b><u>IDENTIFYING, RECRUITING, AND PREPARING HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS</u></b>	<b><u>1</u></b>
<b><u>A. SIGNIFICANCE</u></b>	<b><u>4</u></b>
A(1) NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE	4
A(2) DEVELOPMENT AND ADVANCEMENT OF THEORY, KNOWLEDGE, AND PRACTICES	5
A(3) MAGNITUDE OF RESULTS	9
<b><u>B. QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN AND SERVICES</u></b>	<b><u>12</u></b>
B(1) GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND OUTCOMES	12
B(2) A COMPREHENSIVE EFFORT TO IMPROVE TEACHING AND LEARNING AND SUPPORT RIGOROUS ACADEMIC STANDARDS	13
B(3) HIGH-QUALITY TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL-DEVELOPMENT SERVICES	28
<b><u>C. QUALITY OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN AND PERSONNEL</u></b>	<b><u>30</u></b>
C(1) QUALIFICATIONS OF PROJECT PERSONNEL	30
C(2) MANAGEMENT PLAN	32
C(3) TIME COMMITMENTS	34
<b><u>D. SUSTAINABILITY</u></b>	<b><u>38</u></b>
D(1) BUILDING CAPACITY TO YIELD LONG-TERM RESULTS	38
D(2) CREATING FINDINGS AND PRODUCTS WITH POTENTIAL VALUE TO OTHER AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS	40
D(3) GUIDANCE ABOUT STRATEGIES SUITABLE FOR REPLICATION OR TESTING IN OTHER SETTINGS	43
<b><u>COMPETITIVE PRIORITIES</u></b>	<b><u>45</u></b>
COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY 1 – SUPPORTING PROGRAMS, PRACTICES, OR STRATEGIES FOR WHICH THERE IS STRONG EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS	45
<b><u>CONCLUSION</u></b>	<b><u>49</u></b>

## **Identifying, Recruiting, and Preparing Highly Effective Teachers**

Teach For America is a nationally significant, externally validated program that recruits, selects, trains, places, and supports new teachers, whom we call corps members, in high-need urban and rural communities across the country, with the expectation that they put their students on the path to college and life success. Since 1990, Teach For America has recruited, selected, trained, and supported approximately 33,000 new public school teachers for all subject areas and grade levels, placing them with partner schools and districts serving the highest-need students in the country.

As this proposal demonstrates, Teach For America's work explicitly addresses the Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) Absolute Priority 1 – teacher and principal recruitment, selection, and preparation. In addition, our proven method of identifying, recruiting, and preparing highly effective first- and second-year teachers will help to further the SEED Competitive Preference Priority 1 – supporting programs, practices, or strategies for which there is strong evidence of effectiveness. This project will enable Teach For America to recruit, select, and train up to 5,800 new corps members to begin teaching in fall 2012, while supporting 9,000 current first- and second-year teachers to lead their high-need students to significant academic gains during the course of the school year.

### **Participation determined through a rigorous and competitive selection process**

Teach For America employs a rigorous, competitive, and research-supported selection process to choose program participants from a large and diverse pool of candidates.

**Rigorous.** For 20 years, Teach For America has studied program participants who have had the most success in advancing student achievement. Working with experts from higher

education and business, we developed a set of selection criteria based on qualities that we have found are predictive of successful teaching in low-income communities:

- Leadership and achievement in academic, professional, or extracurricular settings
- Perseverance in the face of challenges
- Strong critical-thinking skills: analyzing and utilizing data; problem solving
- The ability to influence and motivate others
- Organizational ability: planning well, meeting deadlines, and working efficiently
- Respect for students and families in low-income communities
- An understanding of Teach For America's mission and the desire to work relentlessly toward that mission

Highly trained selectors evaluate applicants against these criteria at each stage of the admissions process – online application, phone interview, and daylong in-person interview, including a sample teaching session – advancing only those who increasingly provide evidence that they have the capabilities that would lead to success as a teacher in a high-need school.

**Competitive.** Nearly 48,000 individuals from all 50 states applied to Teach For America's 2011 corps – the largest number of applicants to date. At more than 130 colleges and universities, more than 5% of the senior class applied, including 27% of seniors at Spelman College, 18% at Harvard University, 16% at Duke University, 14% at Morehouse College, 9% at the University of Virginia, 8% at the University of Michigan Ann-Arbor, and 7% at the University of Washington-Seattle. Of these applicants, 11% were selected to serve in the corps. These first-year corps members earned an average GPA of 3.6, and 99 percent held a leadership position on campus.

**Supported by Research.** A recent study found that, overall, the Teach For America selection model successfully identifies teachers who will have a positive impact on student achievement.<sup>1</sup> The study also found that the Teach For America selection model is helping to predict which teachers will be most successful in their first year of teaching. Considering there is limited evidence from other studies on the factors that predict teacher effectiveness, this is a very significant finding.

### **Serving High-Need Students**

Teach For America serves the highest-need students in the country. In the schools where we place teachers<sup>2</sup>, more than 90% of students are African American or Latino/Hispanic and roughly 80% receive free or reduced-price lunch.<sup>3</sup> According to a 2004 study by Mathematica Research Inc., students in Teach For America teachers' classrooms began the year, on average, at the 14th percentile against the national norm.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Dobbie, W. (2011). Teacher Characteristics and Student Achievement: Evidence from Teach For America.

<sup>2</sup> In the 2011-12 school year, Teach For America places teachers in around 225 school districts and an additional 325 charter schools/charter management organizations.

<sup>3</sup> Demographic information obtained from greatschools.org and schoolmatters.com. Using these websites, we looked up the demographic information for each school in which we placed corps members during the 2008-09 school year.

<sup>4</sup> Decker, P., Mayer, D., & Glazerman, S. (2004). The Effects of Teach For America on Students: Findings from a National Evaluation. Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.

## **A. Significance**

### **A(1) National Significance**

Three key factors contribute to Teach For America's national significance. First, we provide a critical source of effective teachers and leaders in some of the highest-poverty regions in the country. Through this project, Teach For America will recruit, select, and prepare up to 5,800 new corps members who will begin teaching in fall 2012, while supporting the professional development of more than 9,000 corps members teaching approximately 600,000 high-need students in 43 regions spanning rural and urban communities across 35 states and the District of Columbia. Additionally, nearly 24,000 alumni – including about 8,000 teachers, more than 660 schools and school system leaders, and thousands of others working in schools, districts, and education organizations nationwide – continue to work at every level of education, policy, and other professions to help ensure that all students in this country receive the educational opportunities they deserve.

Second, while many school districts and public charter schools access new teachers from local alternate routes, Teach For America remains the sole source for exceptional national prospects. This project will help support our efforts to recruit on more than 1,500 college campuses, attracting seniors and graduates from all academic majors and backgrounds who have demonstrated achievement, perseverance, and leadership. Through a strong national brand, aggressive outreach, and careful selection, we provide high-need local education agencies (LEAs) with access to a unique national pipeline of new teachers, most of whom would not have otherwise considered teaching. In fact, according to a recent Harvard University study, Teach

For America corps members are more likely to be employed at P-12 schools and in the education sector after their two-year commitment than applicants who did not join.<sup>5</sup>

Third, Teach For America is a leading organization in the landscape of K-12 education in this country. The effective teachers and future educational leaders generated through this project will have national influence on educational practices and priorities. As described by Talia Milgrom-Elcott, program officer in education at the Carnegie Corporation of New York: “Teach For America has transformed our nation’s conversation around education – catalyzing a movement that is changing policies and improving practice....Teach For America is helping to demonstrate and replicate what is possible in our most underserved schools. It is foundational to our education reform efforts – providing an increasingly strong pipeline of human capital in high need communities across the country.”

## **A(2) Development and Advancement of Theory, Knowledge, and Practices**

Teach For America focuses on continuously deepening our knowledge and advancing our ability to recruit, select, train, and develop a growing number of highly effective teachers. Through this project, we will directly contribute to broader practices around teacher recruitment and development in the following ways: (1) sharing knowledge with other organizations, schools, and school districts to advance understanding and develop best practices around teacher training and development; (2) participating in third-party research that gives insight into successful practice; and (3) developing more teachers who, informed by their Teach For America

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<sup>5</sup> Participating in Teach For America increased the probability of being employed in a P-12 school by 35 percentage points, and in education more broadly by 48 percentage points, demonstrating Teach For America’s strength as a leadership pipeline for the education sector. Fryer, Roland G., Jr. and Dobbie, Will. Harvard University. “The Impact of Voluntary Service on Future Outcomes: Evidence from Teach For America.” September 2011.

experience, will join our alumni network and become lifelong leaders impacting educational policy and practice.

**Knowledge sharing.** Under this project, Teach For America will partner with more than 2,900 schools, including about 225 school districts and 350 charter schools/charter management networks across the country. Increasingly, these schools and school districts are looking to Teach For America for guidance and advice on their own teacher practices. For example, this year a handful of school districts – including the Fort Worth Independent School District; Dumas Public School District, Lakeside School District, and KIPP Delta in Arkansas; and four Mississippi elementary schools working in partnership with the Barksdale Reading Institute – are incorporating our Teaching As Leadership (TAL) published text and public website<sup>6</sup> into their teacher preparation and support frameworks. Moreover, the IDEA charter network and the Pharr-San Juan-Alamo school district are offering a five-week training camp for new teachers, developed with Teach For America as part of a broader partnership effort to create the Rio Grande Valley Center for Teaching and Leading Excellence to help attract, select, develop, and retain the most talented educators possible.

Partnerships with graduate schools of education also often result in the sharing and development of best practices. For example, we worked closely with Relay Graduate School of Education (formerly “Teacher U”), a master’s program run through Hunter College in New York, to help develop the curriculum, scope, and sequence for their unique graduate program (other co-collaborators include Achievement First, KIPP, and Uncommon Schools). Under this SEED project, we also will continue executing on our partnership with the Arizona State

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<sup>6</sup> In 2010, Teach For America published Teaching As Leadership: The Highly Effective Teacher’s Guide to Closing the Achievement Gap, a text that draws from 20 years of learning from Teach For America’s most successful teachers, and a companion public website, [teachingasleadership.org](http://teachingasleadership.org). To date, more than 59,000 texts have been sold or disseminated, and the site has received over 180,000 visits.

University School of Education to pilot the adoption of Teach For America’s approach to teacher recruitment, selection, pre-service, and ongoing professional development within a campus-based teacher-education program with potential for replication in other universities.

**Third Party Research.** We collaborate with external researchers not only to drive programmatic improvements, but also to help validate our impact and publicly share lessons learned around identifying, preparing, and supporting highly effective teachers in low-income schools. For example, we recently partnered with Harvard researcher William Dobbie to ask whether Teach For America’s selection process can identify effective teachers.<sup>7</sup> Namely, his study assessed whether the competencies that Teach For America candidates are evaluated on are predictive of how well they will perform in the classroom, as measured by student achievement scores and student behavior outcomes. University of Pennsylvania researchers, led by Angela Duckworth, conducted a similar study, focusing on a selection competency that was recently incorporated into Teach For America’s selection model – a metric of whether the candidate works relentlessly on his/her pursuits.<sup>8</sup> The study found that this newly added competency effectively predicts both retention and teacher performance.

While there is strong evidence that teacher quality is associated with improvements in student achievement (e.g., Rockoff, 2004; Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain, 2005; Aaronson, Barrow, and Sander, 2007; Kane and Staiger, 2008), education scholars have been hard-pressed to identify specific characteristics related to teacher effectiveness. The studies by Dobbie and the University of Pennsylvania researchers are among the first to detect a relationship between observable teacher characteristics and student success. Our eagerness to participate in such studies reflects our commitment to partnerships that allow us to rigorously reflect on the

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<sup>7</sup> Dobbie, W. (2011). Teacher Characteristics and Student Achievement: Evidence from Teach For America.

<sup>8</sup> Duckworth, A., Robertson-Kraft, C., & Grant, A. (2011). True Grit: Trait-Level Perseverance and Passion for Long-Term Goals Predict Effectiveness and Retention Among Novice Teachers. *Work in Progress*.

effectiveness of our program, and to share lessons that we have learned with the wider education community.

During the course of this project, we will be working with external researchers on more than 40 studies. Additionally, in partnership with the American Enterprise Institute, we aim to convene a select group of education researchers and thought leaders to help us develop a research agenda for the future that will be driven, in part, by the research questions that might have the greatest implications for and value to the field, such as: What selection criteria are most predictive of high-impact beginning teachers?; What is the relationship between academic major/content knowledge and effectiveness in the classroom?; What elements of effective teaching are most malleable through opportunities in adult learning and development?; What professional-development structures support positive changes in dispositions?

**Alumni Impact.** Teach For America's theory of change is rooted in the belief that corps members will translate lessons learned from teaching successfully in low-income communities to become lifelong leaders for educational equity. Indeed, Harvard and American Enterprise Institute researchers found that more founders and leaders of education organizations participate in Teach For America than in any other organization or program.<sup>9</sup> This project will help put thousands more individuals on the path to long-term leadership, many of whom, informed and influenced by their Teach For America experience, will make significant contributions to the development and advancement of theory, knowledge, and practice related to effective teaching in our context. As just one example, as president of The New Teacher Project, alumnus Tim Daly has played a critical role in informing the national dialogue on education, catapulting teacher effectiveness and evaluation to the forefront of federal and state policy discussions through the

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<sup>9</sup> Higgins, M., Hess, R., Wiender, J., & Robison, W. (2011). Creating a Corps of Change Agents – Teach For America Alumni Project. *Education Next*.

organization's landmark study "The Widget Effect: Our National Failure to Acknowledge and Act on Differences in Teacher Effectiveness." All four of the report's major policy recommendations were incorporated into the U.S. Department of Education's Race to the Top competition, and the report is helping to drive other policy changes at the local, state, and federal levels. Many other alumni, in their work as district leaders, elected officials, academic researchers and Ph.D. students, and staff at organizations such as Education Trust and National Council on Teacher Quality, are making significant contributions to the dialogue and knowledge base around recruiting, training, and developing effective teachers. This project will ensure that Teach For America continues to produce more of these types of future leaders in the field.

### **A(3) Magnitude of Results**

During the project period, more than 9,000 corps members are impacting approximately 600,000 students across the country, up 15 percent from the previous school year. While research has shown that most educational interventions yield low to moderate effect sizes, the effect sizes from the most rigorous studies on Teach For America are among the highest of those found for popular educational interventions:

- The 2004 experimental study by Mathematica Policy Research found an effect size of .15 in math when comparing Teach For America corps members with all other teachers in the study, including more experienced teachers. When compared only with other novice teachers, the effect size of having a Teach For America corps member was .26.<sup>10</sup>
- In their 2008-09 study, researchers from the Urban Institute/CALDER found that the effect size across subject areas in high school was .10, with a larger effect size of .18 in

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<sup>10</sup> Decker, P., Mayer, D., & Glazerman, S. (2004). The Effects of Teach For America on Students: Findings from a National Evaluation. Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.

science. This impact was two to three times the size of the impact of having an experienced teacher relative to a novice teacher.<sup>11</sup>

- In their 2010 study, researchers from the University of North Carolina found that the effect size for Teach For America corps members relative to traditionally prepared UNC graduates across high school subject areas was .13. For middle school math, the effect size was .15, and researchers found that the positive impact on student test scores was roughly the equivalent of 90 days of additional instruction – or an additional half year of learning.<sup>12</sup>

By comparison, the effect sizes for several common education interventions are significantly lower than the effect sizes found in studies of Teach For America corps members:

- **National Board Certified Teachers:** Two longitudinal state-level studies of the impact of having a National Board certified teacher in Florida and North Carolina detected effect sizes of .02-.04 in reading and .01-.07 in math.<sup>13</sup>
- **Class size reduction:** Using the most widely cited research on class-size reduction, an experimental study in Tennessee found that the impact of reducing class size in the early grades from 22-26 students to 13-17 ranged from .1 to .2 in reading and math.<sup>14</sup> A study

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<sup>11</sup> Xu, Z., Hannaway, J., & Taylor, C. (2007). Making a Difference? The Effects of Teach for America in High School. The Urban Institute and the National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research.

<sup>12</sup> Henry, G., Thompson, C., Bastian, K., Fortner, C., Kershaw, D. Purtell, K., & Zulli, R. (2010). Portal Report: Teacher Preparation and Student Test Scores in North Carolina. Carolina Institute for Public Policy, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<sup>13</sup> Goldhaber, D. & Anthony, E. (2006). National Board Certification as a Signal of Effective Teaching. The Urban Institute, 2006; Harris, D.N. & Sass, R. (2008). The Effects of NBPTS-Certified Teachers on Student Achievement. The Urban Institute.

<sup>14</sup> Nye, B., Hedges, L.V. & Konstantopoulos, S. (2000). The Effects of Small Classes on Academic Achievement: The Results of the Tennessee Class Size Experiment. American Educational Research Journal (37), 123-5.

on teacher credentials in North Carolina found that the impact of a class size reduction of five students was .01 to .025.<sup>15</sup>

- **Master's degree:** Most research on teachers having master's degrees as a measure of teacher quality finds no impact.<sup>16</sup>
- **Teacher Intelligence:** Rockoff, Jacob, Kane, and Staiger (forthcoming) find that students assigned to a teacher with higher cognitive or non-cognitive skills score about 0.03 standard deviations higher in math.<sup>17</sup> Rockoff and Speroni (forthcoming) also find that students assigned to more highly ranked New York City Teaching Fellows score about 0.015 standard deviations higher in math.

Notably, since conducting rigorous research on teacher performance may require several years of data, many existing studies focus on corps members who participated in the program several years ago. The evidence shows that Teach For America teachers, on average, effect greater student achievement gains than the teachers that students would otherwise have, and because we continue to improve our selection, training, and support program to produce even more highly effective teachers, we believe this project will lead to improvements in teaching and have significant impact on the high-need students we serve.

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<sup>15</sup> Clotfelter, C., Ladd, H.F. & Vigdor, J.L. (2007). Teacher Credentials and Student Achievement in High School: A Cross-Subject Analysis with Student Fixed Effects. The Urban Institute/CALDER.

<sup>16</sup> Aaronson, D., Barrow, L. & Sander, W. (2007). Teachers and Student Achievement in the Chicago Public High Schools. *Journal of Labor Economics* (25), 95-135.; Grissmer, D.W., Flanagan, A. Kawata, J.H. & Williamson, S. (2000). *Improving Student Achievement: What State NAEP Scores Tell Us*. Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation; Rivkin, S., Hanushek, E. & Kain, J. (2005). Teachers, Schools, and Academic Achievement. *Econometrica*, 73(2), 417-458.

<sup>17</sup> Rockoff, Jonah E., and Cecilia Speroni. Forthcoming. Subjective and Objective Evaluations of Teacher Effectiveness: Evidence from New York City. *Labour Economics*.

## B. Quality of the Project Design and Services

### B(1) Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes

A SEED grant would help enable Teach For America to support more than 9,000 teachers in high-need schools during the 2011-12 school year. In addition, the funds would allow us to recruit, select, train, and place up to 5,800 new teachers for the 2012-13 school year. The following table lists the key objectives, measures, and quantitative goals associated with the project, including the percentage of highly effective teachers this grant would enable us to support and develop over the course of the 2011-12 school year.

**Table 1. Project Objectives, Measures, and Goals**

Objective	Measures	Goals
Recruiting and selecting diverse applicants with potential to be highly effective teachers	% acceptance rate, average GPA; % African American, Latino, and low-income background	11%-15%; 3.6 GPA; 12%, 9%, 33%
Placing teachers in high-need schools	# of new corps members beginning teaching in partner districts/schools (2012-13 school year); % serving high concentrations of students in poverty	5,800; 100%
Retaining teachers through at least two years	% retention of first-year corps members into second year of teaching; % of corps members who complete two years in the classroom	90%; 87%
Preparing and developing highly effective teachers	# of corps members supported (2011-12 school year)	9,000
Evaluating teacher performance and identifying the percentage of highly effective teachers, according to student growth <sup>18</sup>	% of “highly effective” first-year corps members (2011-12 school year)	39%
	% of “highly effective” second-year corps members (2011-12 school year)	52%
	% of “effective” first-year corps members (2011-12 school year)	76%
	% of “effective” second-year corps members (2011-12 school year)	83%

<sup>18</sup> In each case, the goal is for the percent of highly effective and effective corps members out of the set of corps members for whom we are able to obtain sufficient student achievement data to judge performance relative to top-performing teachers. In 2011-12, our goal is to have sufficient data for 85% of our corps. In 2010-11, analysis showed that the corps members for whom we had data were representative of the corps overall.

Delivering a comprehensive approach that is financially viable and cost effective <sup>19</sup>	Estimated three-year cost per participant (one year for recruitment, selection, placement, and training, and two years of professional support)	\$43,188
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Through this SEED project, in 2011-12, Teach For America will achieve the following outcomes:

- Creation of a national pipeline of up to 5,800 diverse, rigorously selected new teachers for students living in poverty in urban and rural communities across the country
- Delivery of a proven approach to preparing and supporting new teachers, with at least 39% of first-year teachers and 52% of second-year teachers deemed highly effective
- Deeper understanding, for us and for the field, of how best to recruit, select, train, and develop highly effective teachers serving concentrations of high-need students

We will evaluate the success of this project according to our progress against the objectives and goals outlined above, while continuing to partner with external researchers to validate our impact and gain further insights. Additionally, we will closely monitor our cost per participant, operating within our estimated three-year investment in the recruitment and development of highly effective teachers.

**B(2) A Comprehensive Effort to Improve Teaching and Learning and Support Rigorous**

**Academic Standards**

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<sup>19</sup> Teach For America makes a three-year investment in recruiting, selecting, training, and developing corps members. In FY12 (October 2011-September 2012), we estimate that our cost per incoming corps member (those entering classrooms in the 2012-13 school year) will be \$17,299 to cover expenses associated with recruitment, selection, placement, and teacher preparation; our total cost per teaching corps member (those serving in classrooms in 2011-12) will be \$12,944. This means that during this project budget, which extends from January to September 2012, our total three-year cost per corps member will be about \$43,188.

Teach For America will meet the objectives described above by providing a comprehensive approach to identifying, recruiting, and preparing highly effective teachers, which will improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students.

**Creating a national pipeline of up to 5,800 diverse, rigorously selected new teachers for**

**high-need students**. Through this project, we will recruit, select, and place up to 5,800 new teachers in LEAs serving high concentrations of students living in poverty, creating a national pipeline of exceptional talent these LEAs would not otherwise be able to access.

**Recruitment.** Through an intensive national recruitment effort, we will generate more than 40,000 applications from outstanding college seniors, recent graduates, and professionals across the country. Last year, nearly 48,000 individuals representing more than 1,500 colleges and universities applied to Teach For America, many of whom would not have otherwise considered teaching; historically, only about one in seven corps members would have entered the teaching profession if not for Teach For America.<sup>20</sup>

At the core of this effort will be our data-driven approach to generating high-potential prospects, which builds upon a combination of mass marketing, targeted personal outreach, and building strategic relationships with influential partner organizations and individuals. Key strategies include the following:

- **Data-driven prospecting.** Building a database of potential prospects sourced from campus registrars, presentations and events, grassroots efforts and referrals. This database includes important information on each prospect – GPA, leadership roles, diversity,

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<sup>20</sup> This figure is based on a survey distributed to individuals who were accepted to the 2010 corps.

interest level, notes from meetings or references – which is used to identify the highest-potential prospects and track our outreach and engagement.

- **Personal outreach.** Reaching out to high-potential prospects and having one-on-one meetings to discuss the achievement gap and Teach For America with the most outstanding students at over 275 private schools and over 230 public universities. Our recruiters conducted more than 25,000 meetings with prospects last year and will meet or exceed that number again during this project year.
- **Campus campaigns.** Working with about 300 undergraduate “campus campaign coordinators” across more than 150 of these campuses who execute publicity campaigns, organize events, and network with professors and student organizations to identify and reach out to high-potential prospects of all backgrounds and majors.
- **Strategic outreach to graduate students and young professionals.** In 2011, 23% of first-year corps members had already graduated from college when they applied to Teach For America, and we will continue to grow applications from this pool.

Additionally, through this project, we will pursue several new strategies:

- **Marketing campaign and messaging.** To remain competitive amongst college seniors, we will refocus our marketing on the importance of joining Teach For America *now*. We will also enlist our corps members and alumni as movement-builders at their alma maters.
- **Replicating successful diversity recruitment strategies.** Our new Diversity Initiatives team will focus on extending our reach and impact on campuses, within national alliances, and to professionals in diverse communities. We will also expand events focused on recruiting diverse prospects, including the Gates Millennium Scholars

Alternative Spring Break, the Rising Leaders Summit and Lead Now Initiative for African-American and Latino college students, and regional site visits.

- **Establishing new partnerships.** We will deepen partnerships with organizations like the Hispanic Scholarship Foundation, with whom we just launched a partnership to increase the number of top Hispanic math and science graduates choosing to teach, while developing new partnerships with groups like the Hispanic Heritage Foundation.

While we are seeing increased competition on college campuses, our strong reputation and track record of success give us confidence that we will be able to achieve our recruitment goals. In 2010, college students ranked Teach For America as the No. 9 most desirable employer on a survey that included all employers (ahead of prominent private companies such as Microsoft and Goldman Sachs).<sup>21</sup> Additionally, Teach For America was the top employer on more than 40 college campuses last year while continuing to attract more applications from graduates. Moreover, we continue to attract a teacher corps more diverse than the college campuses at which we recruit, though we strive to do even better in this area. Among 2011 corps members, 12% are African American and 8% are Latino, while African Americans make up only 5% of graduates at the top 400 colleges and universities and Latinos only 6%.<sup>22</sup> Building on this strong foundation, we are optimistic about recruiting a pool of exceptional, diverse applicants to commit to teaching for at least two years in low-income communities.

**Selection.** As described in the introductory section, Teach For America employs a rigorous, competitive, and research-supported selection process to identify those applicants most likely to become highly effective teachers in schools serving concentrations of students growing up in poverty. Under this project, we will identify and matriculate up to 5,800 new corps

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<sup>21</sup> BusinessWeek, "The Hottest Employers 2010," April 30, 2010.

<sup>22</sup> US Department of Education, 2008; Institute of International Education, 2004; Top 400 colleges and universities, refers to the 430 schools listed as "most selective" or "more selective" by U.S. News & World Report, 2008.

members. Additionally, we will gather and analyze selection-decision data to continue to refine our selection model and to enable researchers to conduct more studies on the predictors of teacher effectiveness.

To create a new cohort of highly effective teachers, we will use a three-stage evaluation process to gather evidence of the key skills and mind-sets that we have seen enable corps members to succeed with their students.

- Applicants first complete an online application, submitting a letter of intent and resume.
- Those who move to the next stage are invited either to a phone interview or directly to an in-person daylong interview.
- Final-stage candidates attend a daylong interview where they conduct a sample teaching session for other candidates, participate in discussions and written exercises based on case studies and issues in education, and engage in a personal interview.

At each stage of the process, highly trained evaluators measure individual evidence of the competencies – leadership and achievement; perseverance; strong critical thinking; organizational skills; the ability to influence and motivate others; building relationships in diverse settings; and fit with Teach For America. Data gathered throughout the evaluation process is fed into our selection model, allowing us to rank candidates according to the likelihood of their success and to accept those for whom there is strong evidence that they could be a highly effective teacher in our context. Additionally, our senior admissions staff reviews hundreds of decisions each year. Re-reviewing files allows us to safeguard against false positives and false negatives that would impact our ability to accurately measure whether an applicant meets our admissions criteria.

Finally, once we admit an applicant, we work closely with each potential corps member to help ensure that the offer is accepted. Historically, about 80% accept our offer of admission to the corps, a yield matching that of Harvard undergraduate admissions. In this manner, we will create a national pipeline of up to 5,800 new teachers with demonstrated potential to be successful teaching students in poverty.

**Teacher placements.** While recruiting and selecting a competitive national teacher corps, we are also developing and deepening the partnerships needed to ensure that corps members will teach in high-need traditional district and public charter schools. We categorize “high-need” according to the percent of students who receive free or reduced-price lunch (at least 75%) as well as non-graduation rates (~25%), ensuring that we continue to prioritize the highest-need schools and communities. We also work closely with our LEA partners (who are the actual employers of our teachers) to retain our teachers through a two-year commitment.

Teach For America placed nearly 5,100 new teachers across 2,900 schools for the 2011-12 school year, approximately 600 more teachers and 200 more schools than the previous year. Under this project, we will secure enough placements for our largest-ever new teacher corps of 5,800 through two primary activities: opening three to four new regions and pursuing new and ongoing placement opportunities in existing regions. Even with budget and hiring constraints, we continue to see significant demand for our corps members in both new and existing regions, which gives us confidence in our plan. Our experience placing corps members in a constrained environment over the last couple of years has helped us build stronger relationships at every level of each local school system to help us navigate placement challenges as they arise.

New regions. In response to local interest, we will work with community leaders to assess the potential for placing corps members in districts and schools with demonstrated need and to create and execute a plan of action for launching a new site. These plans will include:

- Establishing a clear path to alternate certification for corps members to become fully certified to teach in the region and, if necessary, establish certification partnerships
- Signing professional service agreements with local public school districts and charter schools to place a corps of teachers in the region, including commitments to paying an estimated average of \$3,000 per corps member per year
- Raising the amount of funding to cover the first three years of operation in a new region.

As part of this project, we aim to open three to four new sites in fall 2012, which would account for approximately one-quarter of projected corps size growth in the 2012-13 school year. Ohio is one focal point of our efforts this year, given the passage of model legislation that eliminates barriers to certification. We are also working to expand our presence in California and Florida, and laying the foundation for future expansion to Portland, Oregon, and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Existing regions. In each region, we partner with school districts to identify the schools and classrooms where corps members are needed most. To achieve the goals of this project, we will need to grow the number of placement partners and schools in 2012, and continue to strengthen our existing relationships with principals who manage our corps members. With strong relationships and tight execution, we anticipate being able to place our full cohort of new teachers – seizing new opportunities created by Race to the Top and other federal and state policy shifts in states such as Georgia, Tennessee, Florida, and Michigan. Additionally, we see some of our regions serving larger school districts, including New York City, Chicago, Los

Angeles, Detroit, and Las Vegas, beginning to stabilize from previous cutbacks. Currently, expressed and potential demand for corps members from our existing regions actually exceeds 5,800, though we do expect fluctuations over the course of the year.

**Teacher retention.** Once corps members are placed, we work aggressively to help our LEA partners retain their corps members. We will aim to retain approximately 90% of the teachers in the 2011 corps into their second year of teaching, surpassing both the national average of 86% and the national average for high-poverty schools of 83%.<sup>23</sup> Additionally, we project that during this project, 87% of corps members who began teaching in 2010 will complete two years in the classroom. We will ensure that our teachers have the necessary coaching and support to succeed by increasingly strong partnerships with schools around identifying struggling corps members, as well as improved tracking systems that enable us to respond more quickly with greater resources and support. Notably, 61% of our alumni stay in the classroom for more than two years,<sup>24</sup> and around two-thirds of alumni stay in education as a career. Additionally, 33% of all of our alumni (nearly 24,000), dating back to our charter corps, are working full-time as P–12 teachers today, and 90 percent of alumni working in schools serve low-income communities.

### **Delivering a proven approach to the preparation and development of highly effective**

**teachers.** Through this project, we will train up to 5,800 new teachers while providing ongoing

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<sup>23</sup> The 86% figure comes from the 2003 report “No Dream Denied: A Pledge to America’s Children” published by the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF). The 83% figure is derived from the NCTAF report, which uses analysis by Richard M. Ingersoll on annual teacher turnover and attrition rates of beginning teachers. In that analysis, the proportion of “leavers” – i.e., those who leave the profession altogether (vs. those who “migrate” to other schools) – is about 20 percent higher in high-poverty schools than it is in public schools overall.

<sup>24</sup> Donaldson, M. (2008). Teach For America Teachers’ Careers: Whether, When, and Why They Leave Low-Income Schools and the Teaching Profession. Harvard Graduate School of Education Project on the Next Generation of Teachers.

professional development for approximately 9,000 current first and second-year teachers, with at least 39% of first-year teachers and 52% of second-year teachers deemed highly effective.

Additionally, the majority of our corps members will be considered effective.

Teach For America sets expectations that all teachers, even in their first year, will lead their students to significant academic progress. In order to do so, we ensure that corps members develop the knowledge, skills, and mind-sets needed to teach successfully in low-income schools by providing a training and professional development curriculum centered on experiential classroom learning; core instructional, classroom management, content, and pedagogical knowledge; robust performance support tools; and observations of excellent teaching. The main tenets of this approach include our Teaching As Leadership (TAL) framework and rubric; pre-service summer training; ongoing support and development from mentors, learning teams, and online resources; and an evaluation system for measuring teacher effectiveness and student growth. Corps members are rated using the TAL rubric at summer institute training and throughout the year, in addition to receiving effectiveness ratings based on our student achievement measurement system.

**Teaching As Leadership framework and rubric.** The bedrock of our training and evaluation model is a framework we call Teaching As Leadership (TAL), developed through observation and analysis of approximately 25,000 corps members across multiple urban and rural settings over the last 20 years. The TAL framework isolates the practices exhibited by teachers achieving exceptional outcomes: (1) setting an ambitious vision; (2) investing students and families in that vision; (3) planning purposefully to meet ambitious goals; (4) executing plans effectively; (5) working relentlessly to achieve their vision; and, (6) continuously reflecting and improving. Each of these strategies corresponds to a series of 28 teacher actions – differentiated

across five levels of proficiency (from pre-novice to exemplary) – which comprise the TAL rubric. Our training and support model is based on helping members successfully employ these teacher actions.

**Teacher preparation – pre-service summer training.** We provide novice teachers with critical foundational knowledge and tools through an intensive, experiential, and outcome-oriented pre-service summer program. In partnership with school districts and university hosts, Teach For America operates five-week summer institutes for new corps members, scheduling 14-hour days that result in the equivalent of approximately nine weeks of learning. Prior to attending institute, corps members complete 30 to 40 hours of independent work. During institute, corps members:

- Teach summer school students under the supervision of experienced teachers. Corps members work towards measurably increasing the academic performance of their summer school students.
- Receive extensive support and feedback on their teaching from advisors and a faculty of Teach For America alumni and other veteran teachers
- Participate in interactive courses, reflection sessions, lesson planning, and curriculum clinics led primarily by our highest-performing alumni

Summer institute trainings are complemented by one-to-two-week induction programs in the communities they serve; these programs familiarize corps members with their placement school and district-specific policies and curricula, reinforce institute learning, and provide planning time for the school year.

**Teacher development - two years of ongoing support.** Teach For America supports corps members throughout their two years in the classroom by providing each of them with a

well-trained instructional coach (called a manager of teacher leadership development), access to high-quality online resources, and a local learning community.

- **Managers of teacher leadership development (MTLD):** Every corps member works closely with an MTLD who observes, evaluates, coaches, and supports them in becoming effective teachers. MTLDs work with cohorts of approximately 34 teachers. They also work closely with school principals to align professional development resources with school-based support. Through this project, we will increase the number of MTLDs in order to maintain an average MTLD:corps member ratio of 1:34 in order to provide valuable coaching and support.
- **Online tools and resources:** We provide teachers and MTLDs with “on demand” assistance, trainings, and tools that promote rigorous academic standards for students. Resources include video examples of model classrooms and teachers performing at all levels of proficiency on the Teaching As Leadership rubric; a resource exchange containing nearly 40,000 assessments, lessons plans, and curricula, each rated for quality and usefulness;<sup>25</sup> and expert blogs, communities, and online courses specifically designed to meet the needs of our teachers. Additionally, all corps members have access to online “student achievement toolkits” that include a collection of foundational tools, assessments, trackers, templates, and other instructional planning materials that are rigorous and standards-aligned and can be accessed according to grade, subject, and state. As part of this project, we will continue to build out the number and quality of the resources available while placing a greater emphasis on developing an engaged

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<sup>25</sup> Last year, 100% of corps members downloaded at least one resource, with a total of more than 1.2 million downloads.

community of corps members and alumni teachers who serve as resources and communities of practice for each other.

- **Learning teams:** Corps members meet regularly in content- and/or grade-level-specific learning teams led by experienced teachers. These meetings are venues for sharing best practices and materials, modeling exemplary teaching, and collaborating around student progress and data.

### **Evaluating the performance of our corps members and the overall success of this project.**

Teach For America has developed a comprehensive, data-driven approach to recruiting, training, and developing talented recent college graduates to teach successfully in low-income communities. We rely on high-quality student achievement data from rigorous tests to drive program improvements and provide tailored support to corps members. Our context is unique in that our corps members serve in 43 regions in 35 states and teach more than 40 subjects (plus special education, bilingual education, and early childhood education). In order to address the complications of cross-contextual comparisons and the need for well-calibrated student achievement data, we recently designed a new student achievement measurement system (SAMS) to generate even better, more useful data for corps members and program staff.

SAMS is a transparent system that supports classroom learning by helping corps members and program staff set and manage toward ambitious yet feasible and measurable goals for their students, and simultaneously provides objective and calibrated data to drive programmatic improvements. The system is grounded in the aspiration that our corps members

perform at the level of highly effective teachers;<sup>26</sup> corps members are therefore measured against a benchmark that reflects a high-performing classroom where students achieve high rates of student growth. At the beginning of the year, corps members work with program staff to determine what their specific classroom benchmark should be, based on historical test score data. In 2011-12, nearly 10% of corps members will employ “tailored benchmarks” to accurately measure corps member impact – these tailored benchmarks represent the impact of top-performing teachers on students in the same grade and subject, and with the same starting point, as the corps member.<sup>27</sup>

When we articulate goals and progress to goals in SAMS, we use “percent of benchmark achieved” – where 100% of benchmark achieved represents what highly effective teachers would accomplish in one year. As part of the SEED grant, we will rely on SAMS to track the number of corps members deemed to be “highly effective” and “effective” – i.e. the number of corps members who achieve at least 1.5 years of growth or 1 to 1.4 years of growth, respectively, with their students.<sup>28</sup> As shown in Table 1, our goal for the 2011-12 school year is that 39% of first-year and 52% of second-year teachers are rated as “highly effective” – and that 76% of first-year and 83% of second-year teachers are rated as “effective.”

**Project Evaluation.** In addition to measuring corps member effectiveness, we will conduct a full internal evaluation of the impact of this project – assessing our progress against

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<sup>26</sup> Specifically, we aspire for our corps members to be on average at the 75th percentile of all teachers (not just novice teachers). We selected the 75th percentile by looking at what was ambitious and feasible given what we saw in pilots conducted over the past two years and external data about teachers in the top quartile.

<sup>27</sup> Our ability to set “tailored high-performing classroom benchmarks” is dependent on access to historical data; we are working to collect additional data such that by 2015, 65%-80% of corps members are relying on these tailored measures.

<sup>28</sup> We will define effective and highly effective as those corps members making % benchmark achieved equal to 1 year of or 1.5 years of growth, respectively, on the scale we use for elementary corps members. For secondary corps members, the amount of growth needed to be effective or highly effective is slightly higher than 1 or 1.5 years of growth. Thus, 1.5 years of growth is the minimum bar for defining ‘highly effective;’ on our scale, the threshold for secondary classrooms might fluctuate as we continue to refine our measures, but the threshold will never dip below 1.5 years of growth across any classrooms.

the quantitative project metrics listed above in Table 1. In addition, data collected during the project period – including the characteristics of those selected to serve in the corps, their performance at summer institute, and their performance in the classroom, as measured by SAMS – will enable us to generate learnings that will help to shape our program in future years. For example, each year we specifically assess how predictive our selection model was in determining whether our corps members were highly effective – noting any trends among specific characteristics and thus recalibrating our selection model to adapt for trends amongst our teachers. Please see Table 2 in section C(3) for additional information on how our organizational leaders will monitor progress throughout the project period.

Additionally, we will continue to participate in external evaluations of the impact of our corps members and of our program model, including an experimental evaluation of whether pre-K–5 Teach For America teachers are more effective at increasing student achievement than their non-Teach For America counterparts. Conducted by Mathematica Policy Research, this study will provide a robust evaluation of our corps member impact in elementary classrooms during an aggressive growth period, and reveal whether the effectiveness of our program has improved since the last experimental study concluded in 2004, providing insight into whether the strategies we are employing under this project have been impactful.

**Focused on continuously improving teaching and learning.** Each year, we examine overall student achievement results, information gathered via surveys and classroom observations, and the impact of various pilot initiatives to inform what more we can do, and what should perhaps do differently, to improve teaching and learning. Priority areas for improving our impact under this project include the following:

- **Developing visions of excellent teaching and learning:** Intense focus across the entire program spectrum – recruitment, selection, training, and support – on grounding corps members and staff in a deep understanding of the Teaching As Leadership approach, including having the very highest aspirations for impact such that high-need students achieve dramatic academic and personal growth that is rigorous and endures beyond a single year in the classroom.
- **Expanding “real-time coaching” pilots to include four summer institutes and at least six regions:** Over the last year, we engaged Lee Cantor, an expert in coaching teachers, to help us pilot an approach to provide intensive hands-on coaching to struggling corps members at two summer institutes and in select regions over the course of the academic year. We trained 17 full-time staff members who were already highly skilled teachers and coaches to deliver real-time coaching, using earbud technology to provide immediate feedback and recommendations while observing in the classroom. This immediate feedback was followed by ongoing coaching and support. Based on positive response from participants in the pilot and data providing evidence of demonstrated improvements in classroom management, teaching, and learning, we will train more experts in this approach and expand this initiative to include four summer institutes and six regions this year.
- **Rolling out enhanced student achievement measurement system (SAMS):** We are rolling out SAMS in phases – completing the transition of all corps members to a continuous measure in 2011-12, while collecting and analyzing immense amounts of data from our state and district partners to expand the use of refined tailored benchmarks to the majority of classrooms between now and 2015. By utilizing more rigorous student

achievement assessments, tailoring benchmarks differentiated by grade levels and subjects, and relying on a continuous measure that incentivizes program staff to focus on all corps members, SAMS will significantly improve the way we evaluate student achievement and teacher effectiveness, help support rigorous academic standards, and lead to improvements in teaching and learning.

### **B(3) High-Quality Training and Professional-Development Services**

Teach For America's training and professional development services are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the corps members who will participate in this project. The studies cited in section A(3) and described in greater detail under Competitive Preference Priority 1 (see p. 45) speak to the positive impact of Teach For America's selection, training, and support programs on student learning.

A series of studies that directly speak to the quality and caliber of the training and support to be delivered through this project is the biannual National Principal Survey, conducted by Policy Studies & Associates. For the past 16 years, Teach For America has commissioned independent, external surveys of its partner principals. The most recent survey, which achieved a 68% response rate, was completed in September 2011. An overwhelming majority of principals (87%) rated Teach For America corps members' training as at least as effective as the training of other beginning teachers. Just over half (53%) found corps members' training to be more effective; 81% of principals are satisfied with the support Teach For America provides. Additionally, the vast majority of principals rated corps members as good, very good, or excellent on a number of indicators of effective teaching and behaviors that Teach For America fosters in training and support activities, including:

- Having high expectations for students (93%)
- Setting ambitious goals for student achievement (94%)
- Planning purposefully to achieve goals (92%)
- Being knowledgeable about the subject matter (91%)
- Developing positive relationships with colleagues and administrators (91%)
- Accessing additional resources to meet student needs (88%)
- Becoming a part of the school community (89%)

These positive results speak to the quality and demonstrated impact of the array of training and professional development services that Teach For America will provide as part of this project.

## **C. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel**

### **C(1) Qualifications of Project Personnel**

Teach For America's president, Matthew Kramer, will serve as the project director, overseeing the head of key functional teams, listed below. Brief biographies of key staff include (see Appendix A for full resumes):

**Matthew Kramer, President** – Matt oversaw the program continuum, including recruitment, selection and placement, teacher preparation, teacher support, and alumni affairs, throughout our major growth effort from 2006 to 2011. Matt joined Teach For America after working at the management consulting firm McKinsey & Company, where he was a partner and consulted with insurers and asset managers, and served nonprofit institutions focused on K-12 education.

**Elisa Villanueva Beard, Chief Operating Officer** – Elisa has served as senior vice president for regional operations and chief operating officer since 2005. In that capacity, she has overseen massive growth, from 130 regional staff members to approximately 800. Elisa joined the staff as executive director of the organization's Rio Grande Valley site. During her four years as executive director, she grew the region's funding base 17 times over, created a functioning community advisory board, and oversaw a corps of teachers that more than doubled.

**Elissa Kim, Senior Vice President, Recruitment** – Elissa has managed the recruitment team since 1999, and in the last eight years has produced 30% compound annual growth in the applicant pool – from 3,000 applicants in 1999 to 48,000 applicants in 2011. Through her stewardship, Teach For America increased the incoming teacher class from 770 teachers per year to over 5,000 teachers per year. She joined Teach For America's staff after teaching ninth and tenth grade English for three

years as part of the 1996 corps in Greater New Orleans. Elissa is a graduate of Northwestern University.

**Dr. Heather Harding, Vice President, Research and Policy** – Prior to joining Teach For America’s staff, Heather served as a principal associate at the Annenberg Institute for School Reform and taught in the Harvard Graduate School of Education’s Teacher Education Program. She earned her master’s and doctoral degrees in education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, where her thesis considered the intersection of race and pedagogy for four successful white urban middle school teachers. Heather also previously served as executive director of the Eastern North Carolina region.

**Eric Scroggins, Executive Vice President, Public Affairs, Growth Strategy, and Development** – Eric is responsible for developing and executing our growth strategy and ensuring that we have the resources to achieve our goals. Eric has served on Teach For America’s staff since 2003. He has created new models connecting growth and development that helped nearly double both overall revenue and the percentage of regions supporting their work fully through local funding. Additionally, Eric has overseen the opening of ten new regions. Eric previously served as executive director of both the Bay Area region and the St. Louis region.

**Jeff Wetzler and Susan Asiyani, Executive Vice Presidents, Teacher Preparation Support and Development** – Jeff and Susan, along with their teams, led our efforts to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our training model. Before joining staff in 2006, Jeff served as a management consultant and product developer at Monitor Group and earned his M.A. in Adult Learning and Leadership at Teacher’s College at Columbia University. Susan began her career in Newark as a 2001 corps member, then joined staff as a manager of teacher learning development. She went on to serve as a managing director of the charter Philadelphia institute

and subsequently as vice president of institutes before pursuing her M.B.A. from Northwestern's Kellogg School of Management. Prior to returning to Teach For America, Susan joined Sears Holding Company as a senior leader reporting to the CEO on key strategic initiatives.

**Sean Waldheim, Vice President, Admissions** – Sean is responsible for overseeing the team that selects, matriculates, and assigns corps members to their placement region. In 2011, his team carefully screened some 48,000 applications to identify roughly 5,100 first-year corps members teaching in the current school year. Prior to joining the admissions team in 2007, Sean spent five years leading more than 250 corps members in the Bay Area as a managing director of program and manager of teacher learning and development. He began his career with Teach For America teaching science at Abramson High School in New Orleans, and is a graduate of Macalester College.

## **C(2) Management Plan**

Teach For America's senior operating committee, led by CEO and founder Wendy Kopp and President Matthew Kramer and comprised of senior leaders of each functional area, meets every month to review progress to goals, discuss critical programmatic or operational needs, monitor organizational efficiency and effectiveness, prioritize, and plan for the future. Within each program area, Teach For America has a management plan and staffing structure that enables the team to monitor and make progress toward clearly defined goals. To monitor expenses, each team has budget managers to set budgetary needs and monitor expenditures, and a budget tracker to track spending for each department.

Strong strategy, superior execution, and tight management against goals in the following four program areas will be critical to ensuring that we achieve the objectives of this project on

time and on budget: recruitment, admissions, teacher preparation and support, and growth and district strategy.

**Recruitment.** All recruitment staff members use data “dashboards” to track progress in moving candidates through the pipeline and to monitor the relationship between recruitment activities and number of applications. Dashboards are customizable for management level, i.e., recruitment managers can see campus-by-campus activity; senior staff can monitor progress and activity across cohorts of recruitment managers, and so on. Matt Kramer and Senior Vice President of Recruitment Elissa Kim review progress against goals and benchmarks at each application deadline to identify areas of concern and opportunity. If we are not on track to achieve the goals associated with this project, staff resources may be redeployed and new strategies may be rapidly developed and tested to address areas of concern – reallocating resources to partnerships or campuses likely to attract more diverse applicants; identifying under- or over-performing campuses and shifting capacity appropriately; testing new messaging, outreach strategies, and events to yield more applications from high-potential prospects.

**Admissions.** Given the multiple deadlines and thousands of interviews happening simultaneously, the admissions team must ensure flawless execution of a tight admissions calendar. We use an online application process that enables the admissions operations team to track the progress of each applicant through the stages of the interview, matriculation, and placement process, and to obtain and manage data on applicants for analysis so that we can continuously improve our selection process. Additionally, the admissions team has developed a new algorithm for use during this project that will allow the team to incorporate important context on each accepted applicant, such as hometown, relevant coursework, and other preferences, to assist in making high-impact regional assignments.

**Teacher training and support.** During Teach For America’s summer training institute, staff monitors teacher development against the Teaching As Leadership proficiency rubric; student academic growth against standards-aligned learning objectives; and operational efficiency in order to maximize pre-service teachers’ time spent training. Throughout the year, Teach For America staff record performance information at not only the teacher level (using Teaching As Leadership), but also aggregated student results at the class level, to measure and maximize each teacher’s contribution towards student learning. The national teacher preparation, support, and development team utilizes this information to monitor progress against project objectives and inform future strategy.

**Growth and district strategy.** Our growth and district strategy team utilizes a corps member placement system that relies on clear milestones and benchmarks throughout the year for securing placements and funding to make decisions on whether to grow, maintain, or contract regional corps size according to demand on the ground. This system allows us to manage toward overall national growth goals and seize new opportunities for placements as they arise, while mitigating the risk associated with volatile district budgets.

**C(3) Time Commitments**

**Table 2: Project objectives, owners, and timelines**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Timeline*</b>
<b>Ensure key milestones and project benchmarks are met</b>	Matt Kramer	Ensure project is conducted on time and within budget	Operating Team Meetings	Every month
		Ensure key personnel report on their progress regularly and that problems are identified early and addressed	Program Team Meetings	Every two months

		immediately		
<b>Recruit exceptional incoming corps members</b>	Elissa Kim	Efficiently grow the number of applicants to Teach For America  Maintain applicant quality while increasing diversity	Conduct on-the-ground cultivation, reviewing application data on a weekly basis and stepping back after each of 5 application deadlines to assess progress and adjust course as needed	October – May
			Recruitment data analysis of prior season and development of strategy for next season	Summer
			Execute new strategies, cultivate additional campus champions, and grow stakeholders	Ongoing
<b>Select incoming corps members with greatest potential to increase student achievement</b>	Sean Waldheim	Evaluate every application through a rigorous, data-driven process  Ensure selection bar is applied consistently as applicant pool grows in size  Assign corps members to teaching placements that match their preferences and qualifications	5 application deadlines, 3 steps to each deadline (initial screen, phone interview, day-long in-person interview)	August, September, October, January, February
			Matriculate at least 75% of accepted applicants	After each application deadline
			Upgrade admissions model with fresh student achievement data	June-July
<b>Train and support corps members</b>	Jeff Wetzler and Susan Asiyani	Ensure successful execution of existing summer training institutes	Plan summer institutes	December-May
			Run effective training institutes	June – August

		<p>Maintain and develop new university partnerships to certify corps members</p> <p>Ensure the continuous improvement of our training and support approach so that the overall effectiveness of the corps members increases every year over the course of the grant</p>	<p>Partner with additional Schools of Education to provide pathways to certification</p> <p>Examine student achievement results and corps member surveys and refine and improve program design</p> <p>Provide ongoing support for corps members</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>August – October (end of institute); Feb – Mar (mid-year); June-August (end of year)</p> <p>August – May</p>
<b>Identify and launch 3-4 expansion sites</b>	Eric Scroggins	<p>Ensure alignment between Teach For America’s mission and geographic presence by identifying regions for expansion with significant need and a clear vision for how Teach For America fits in with their plan to address local educational inequity</p> <p>Cultivate key stakeholders and raise private and local support in prospective sites</p>	Identify prospective sites that meet Teach For America’s expansion criteria	October through November
			Secure support from key stakeholders	October – September
			Host public new site launch event	Spring
<b>Optimize teacher placements across existing regions</b>	Elisa Villanueva Beard and Eric Scroggins	<p>Manage the intersection of applicant numbers and preferences with the local teacher hiring landscape</p> <p>Determine overall distribution of corps by region, grade level and subject</p>	Meet with regional partners to discuss their demand for corps members	Spring
			Allocate corps member distribution by grade level, subject and region	Completed by April

<b>Ensure rigorous external evaluations of our program are undertaken and publicly shared</b>	Heather Harding	Liaison with independent researchers to ensure project evaluations are undertaken with full cooperation and assistance	Provide data and other assistance to help researchers complete their studies	Ongoing
			Share findings with education community	Ongoing

\*The activities associated with this project extend from October 2011 to September 2012, in alignment with Teach For America’s fiscal year, while the project budget covers January – September 2012.

## **D. Sustainability**

### **D(1) Building capacity to yield long-term results**

A SEED grant of up to \$15 million will help build Teach For America's capacity to continue to develop a pipeline of exceptional talent for K-12 education – making investments in recruiting and developing highly effective teachers and leaders who will have long-term impact on hundreds of thousands of students and the education sector more broadly. Our diversified funding model and the impact that Teach For America has on project participants' beliefs and career paths will ensure long-term sustainability and results.

#### **Diversified, sustainable funding model utilizing public and philanthropic support.**

Teach For America has a track record of success in building organizational capacity to deliver results by mobilizing significant philanthropic and public support. In FY2011 (October 2010 – September 2011), Teach For America generated \$234 million against a \$209 million budget, maintaining adequate reserve funding to operate in a fiscally responsible manner, especially given our commitment to investing in corps members for a full three years (including one year for recruitment, selection, and preparation and two years of support in the classroom).

Moreover, since more than 75% of Teach For America's revenue is generated in our 43 regions and the majority is from private funders, our funding base is extremely diversified.

A \$15 million federal SEED grant will cover an estimated 6% of Teach For America's FY2012 (October 2011 – September 2012) budget, investing in core project activities from January to September 2012 and leveraging significant private philanthropic resources. Both during and beyond this grant, we will continue to ensure financial sustainability by (1) deepening and broadening local funding bases to support the size of the teacher corps in existing regions, including contributions from individuals, corporations, and foundations, as well as district fees

and state support; (2) opening new regions with significant philanthropic investments that cover operating budget and reserve requirements; and (3) growing national operating dollars through significant gifts from individuals and expanded smaller gift campaigns, as well as continued national foundation and corporate partnerships. Doing so will allow us to continue pursuing the activities associated with this project on an ongoing basis

**Pipeline of exceptional talent for K-12 education.** This one-year project plays a critical role in the long-term development of a pipeline of exceptional talent for K-12 education that will have an enduring impact. As evidenced by a recent Harvard University research study, participation in Teach For America markedly affects corps members' education beliefs, racial tolerance, and career paths.<sup>29</sup> The preliminary findings indicate that the Teach For America experience strengthens participants' conviction in the academic potential of all children regardless of income level or race, and increases racial tolerance among participants across all racial groups. In addition, the experience increases the likelihood that participants will pursue a career in the education sector. A previous study by Stanford researchers that found corps members are more likely to remain in education, whether in administration, educational policy work, or charter school management, than those who opt not to enter Teach For America or drop out of the program. Research strongly suggests what we see and experience every year - that the Teach For America program has a lasting influence on corps members' beliefs and careers.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, despite the fact that less than 14% had been considering a career in teaching when they

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<sup>29</sup> Dobbie, W. & Fryer, R. (2011b). The Impact of Voluntary Youth Service: Evidence from Teach For America. Harvard University.

<sup>30</sup> McAdam, D. & Brandt, C. (2009). Assessing the Effects of Voluntary Youth Service The Case of Teach For America. Stanford University.

first entered the corps, 33% of all of our alumni are working full-time as P–12 classroom teachers today.<sup>31</sup>

Teach For America alumni teachers have earned the highest teaching accolades, including Mississippi Teacher of the Year Birdette Hughey, who received this honor as a second-year corps member last year, and 2005 National Teacher of the Year Jason Kamras. In fact, nearly 200 alumni received teacher of the year awards between 2009 and 2011 alone.

Additionally, many alumni work toward educational equity from outside the classroom. Harvard and American Enterprise Institute researchers found that more founders and leaders of education organizations participated in Teach For America than in any other organization or program.<sup>32</sup>

Hundreds of Teach For America alumni have gone on to become school and school district leaders. Today, 664 alumni serve as principals, district leaders, superintendents, and chancellors, including Kevin Huffman (Houston Corps '92), the commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Education, and Kaya Henderson (New York Corps '92), the current chancellor of District of Columbia Public Schools. Our alumni have founded charter school networks and charter schools, including IDEA Public Schools, KIPP (Knowledge Is Power Program), Rocketship Education, and YES Prep. This project will help attract, support, and develop thousands more talented leaders who will become the next wave of outstanding alumni teachers, educators, innovators, and leaders for educational equity.

## **D(2) Creating findings and products with value to other agencies and organizations**

During the course of this project, Teach For America will engage in data-driven knowledge development, external research projects, and internal studies, which will generate

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<sup>31</sup> Teach For America 2010 Alumni Survey

<sup>32</sup> Higgins, M., Hess, R., Wiender, J., & Robison, W. (2011). Creating a Corps of Change Agents – Teach For America Alumni Project. *Education Next*.

findings and ultimately products with value to other agencies and organizations. We will continue to refine and deepen our understanding around recruiting, training, supporting, and developing highly effective teachers. We will harvest lessons from our data-driven model and focus on continuous learning and improvement, and participate in new and ongoing research studies so that we can continue to contribute to the efforts of other agencies and organizations to improve practice.

**Knowledge development.** In executing this project, we will collect and analyze significant amounts of data related to recruitment, selection, teacher training and development, and student outcomes. All of this data will enable us to continue to refine and deepen our understanding of how best to recruit, train, support, and develop highly effective teachers for students in poverty. We will continue to share our insights and learning through knowledge-sharing partnerships and activities as described in Section A.2.

Additionally, during this project, Teach For America's knowledge development team will work to deepen our understanding of transformational teaching and accelerate the evolution of a new iteration of our Teaching As Leadership framework, currently referred to as TAL 2.0. As part of this multi-year initiative, beginning this year, this team will host conversations to gain additional clarity about what transformational teaching is, what it requires, and how it is distinguished from other paradigms; to identify shortcomings in our current Teaching As Leadership framework and related resources; and to harvest and synthesize learnings that can improve our Teaching As Leadership model. Over time, the resulting products will not only be critical to our ability to produce more highly effective teachers and leaders, but also will become resources for others in the field.

**External research.** Teach For America is currently engaged with external researchers around approximately 43 studies on our program model. To date, ten of these studies have been completed and should be published during this project, and 33 additional evaluations are in progress. We are also actively seeking to initiate at least two new studies on the long-term impact of Teach For America (e.g., the impact of Teach For America on the long-term career trajectories and mind-sets of our alumni), as well as three new studies focusing on Teach For America’s impact within regions that have not yet been studied by external researchers. Examples of studies under way include: assessing the relative impact of Teach For America corps members as compared to other novice teachers; Teach For America’s impact on low-income college applicants; the effects of Teach For America’s alumni networks and civic engagement of alumni; and the impact of Teach For America on district and city transformation.

**Internal studies.** Teach For America also undertakes rigorous internal evaluations of our program and impact; the two most significant internal studies being conducted during this project will generate findings and papers relevant to others working to improve approaches to teacher effectiveness and development:

- **“Good to Great” study:** Working with Jim Collins and an advisory board of education experts, we have designed a study that utilizes a matched-pair inflection point methodology to delve more rigorously into the drivers of teacher improvement. This study is evaluating why some teachers go from being “good” to being “great” – whereas others simply remain “good” teachers. Now in its second year, the study takes advantage of an expansive array of data and a diverse group of teachers. We believe that the study, upon completion in 2014, will lead to the discovery of new insights and publications about what does and does not drive performance.

- **Teaching As Leadership (TAL) rubric validation study:** This study will allow us to understand which teacher actions best predict effective teaching by further evaluating the correlation between Teach For America’s TAL rubric and the characteristics of highly effective teachers. Also in its second full year, the study is designed to generate useful data and key insights for Teach For America as well as our partner districts and the larger field of educational researchers and practitioners; ultimately, we believe the findings from this work will play a central role in refining understandings of how teachers become more effective over time, and how to identify and develop a force of highly effective educators. This study is also on track to be completed in 2014.

### **D(3) Guidance about strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings**

In evaluating the impact of corps members who are participants in this project, student achievement data is collected and normed using our internal student achievement measurement system (SAMS). This enables us to identify effective teachers in diverse contexts across our network of 43 communities across the country, noting trends in effectiveness within particular grade levels/subject matters as well as in specific regions. SAMS also enables us to pilot a variety of corps member interventions, assessing what teacher support structures and resources yield the highest results. These findings provide guidance for which strategies we, and sometimes others, should try to replicate in other settings.

Furthermore, by analyzing our overall progress against the project objectives, we will be able to identify and adopt best practices across our entire network. Data about what worked and what didn’t in each initiative will help us to uncover strategies for replication in the year ahead (e.g. pilots around diversity recruitment and real-time coaching in corps member classrooms).

By testing initiatives in different settings across the country, we drive learning that will enable growth in both scale and impact – improving our ability to respond to demand from new districts and charter schools. Indeed, over the last 21 years, our demonstrated results across multiple contexts and high levels of principal satisfaction have led to continued, increasing demand. By engaging each year in the activities and evaluation practices associated with this SEED grant, we have shown our ability to identify and replicate successful strategies while continuously testing new approaches in different settings to adapt, adopt, and execute them effectively.

Finally, external studies under way during this project, including Mathematica Policy Research’s experimental evaluation that was referenced in Section B(2) on page 26, will document various aspects of our program and the activities associated with this grant, ultimately helping to demonstrate the impact of our approach and to guide decisions around whether and how to replicate it in other settings – in whole or in part.

**Competitive Preference Priority 1 – Supporting Programs, Practices, or Strategies for Which There is Strong Evidence of Effectiveness**

In rigorous independent studies and in states with the data to analyze the relative effectiveness of teacher pathways, Teach For America corps members are consistently shown to be the strongest new teachers, at statistically significant levels, with the greatest impact on student achievement; some studies show that students of corps members outperform students of veteran teachers. These results are confirmed by both a large-scale experimental study as well as numerous quasi-experimental studies.

**Experimental.** Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., released an independent study in 2004 that compared the academic gains of students taught by Teach For America corps members with the gains of similar students taught by other teachers in the same schools and grade. Using random assignment of students to teachers – research methodology widely regarded as the gold standard – this study found that students of Teach For America corps members made more progress in a year in both reading and math than would typically be expected, and attained significantly greater gains in math compared with students of other teachers, including veteran and certified teachers.<sup>33</sup>

The researchers concluded that the impact of Teach For America teachers was equivalent to an effect size of about 0.15, or approximately one additional month of instruction. When the Teach For America teachers were compared only to the novice non-Teach For America teachers (novice teachers were defined as being in their first three years of teaching), the effect size was 0.26. The authors noted that this impact of having a Teach For America teacher compared with another novice teacher was roughly equivalent to reducing class size by eight students.

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<sup>33</sup> Decker, P., Mayer, D., & Glazerman, S. (2004). The Effects of Teach For America on Students: Findings from a National Evaluation. Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.

**Quasi-Experimental. North Carolina (high school):** The most persuasive study documenting the impact of Teach For America corps members on student achievement at the high-school level was conducted in 2008 (and updated in 2009) by the Urban Institute and the National Center for the Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research (CALDER).<sup>34</sup> Researchers found that when looking across eight subjects at the high school level, the impact of a Teach For America teacher is equivalent to an effect size of 0.10. This impact was two to three times the size of the impact of having a teacher with three or more years of experience relative to a novice teacher. Concluding that corps members had a stronger impact on student achievement than all other non-Teach For America teachers, including teachers certified in their field and more experienced teachers, researchers wrote: “Disadvantaged secondary students would be better off with TFA teachers, especially in math and science, than with fully licensed in-field teachers with three or more years of experience.”

**New Teacher Comparisons.** Several states have begun to look at the effectiveness of particular pathways into the teaching profession. When Teach For America is one of the programs included in comparative analysis, our teachers are among the strongest new teachers, using measures of student achievement.

*Louisiana:* For the last several years, the state of Louisiana has been conducting a value-added study of teacher-preparation programs to assess the effectiveness of each preparation program based on the achievement of students taught by new teachers from that program.<sup>35</sup> In 2009, the researchers conducted an analysis of Teach For America teachers using data of students in grades 4 to 9 from the 2004-05 to 2006-07 school years from longitudinal databases

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<sup>34</sup> Xu, Z., Hannaway, J., & Taylor, C. (2007). Making a Difference? The Effects of Teach for America in High School. The Urban Institute and the National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research.

<sup>35</sup> The reports from the Value-Added Teacher Preparation Program Assessment Model are available on Louisiana’s Board of Regents’ website.

linking students, teachers, and courses.<sup>36</sup> Researchers found that Teach For America teachers were more effective than novice non-Teach For America teachers, and were as effective as veteran non-Teach For America teachers across the state in math, science, reading, and language arts. The researchers concluded that the positive results surpassed what traditionally would be expected of new or, in many cases, veteran teachers: “Overall, the data suggest that TFA corps members may be more comparable to experienced certified teachers than new teachers in their effectiveness.”

*North Carolina:* In 2010, researchers from the University of North Carolina system completed a study of pathways into teaching in North Carolina.<sup>37</sup> The study was designed to understand better the impact on student achievement of graduates from the UNC traditional teacher preparation system, which is the leading provider of teachers in the state, compared with individuals from other pathways, including Teach For America. The researchers concluded that Teach For America corps members had a greater impact on student achievement than traditionally prepared UNC graduates in middle school math and in high school math, science, and English. At every grade level and subject studied, Teach For America corps members did as well as or better than the traditionally prepared UNC graduates. The researchers suggested that Teach For America “represents an opportunity for UNC and North Carolina to learn and improve” and recommended that UNC identify elements of the Teach For America model that would be “portable and scalable” to UNC preparation programs.

*Tennessee:* In 2010 and again in 2011, researchers from the Tennessee State Board of Education and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission completed a report card of teacher

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<sup>36</sup> Noell, G. & Gansle, K. (2009). Teach for America Teachers’ Contribution to Student Achievement in Louisiana in Grades 4-9: 2004-2005 to 2006-2007.

<sup>37</sup> Henry, G., Thompson, C., Bastian, K., Fortner, C., Kershaw, D. Purtell, K., & Zulli, R. (2010). Portal Report: Teacher Preparation and Student Test Scores in North Carolina. Carolina Institute for Public Policy, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

training programs.<sup>38</sup> The goal of the study is to identify teacher training programs that tend to produce new teachers who are highly effective as well as to identify programs that tend to produce new teachers who are very ineffective. All 41 Tennessee teacher preparation institutions and Teach For America were considered in the report in both years. The study considered beginning teachers, defined as those with less than three years of experience, teaching tested subjects and grade-levels.

For two years in a row, Teach For America was the top new teacher preparation program in the state of Tennessee, based on an analysis of the value-added student achievement data scores of 42 programs. In 2011, Teach For America Memphis and Nashville teachers had a greater impact on student achievement than other teachers in Tennessee in 32 and 26 different comparisons, respectively. The next top-performing program achieved greater impact on student achievement relative to other groups of teachers in just 11 comparisons.

Additionally, in 2010 and 2011, Teach For America was among the two programs in Tennessee to produce teachers with higher student achievement gains than veteran teachers (those with three or more years of experience). Moreover, Teach For America was the only program in the state that did so for both years.

The research literature on teacher experience has found that, on average, novice teachers do not perform as well as more experienced teachers. Given that high-poverty schools are more likely to have inexperienced teachers than lower-poverty schools, low-income students may bear a larger burden of any negative effects of teacher inexperience. However, as the research above demonstrates, new teachers from Teach For America typically do better than other new teachers;

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<sup>38</sup> 2010 Report Card on the Effectiveness of Teacher Training Programs,” Tennessee State Board of Education and Tennessee Higher Education Commission, 2010 and 2011.

and they do as well as, and often better, than experienced teachers in advancing student achievement.

## **Conclusion**

At the conclusion of the SEED grant, over 9,000 corps members will have reached 600,000 of our nation's most disadvantaged students, and we will have successfully recruited and selected, via a rigorous and competitive process, a diverse incoming corps of up to 5,800 talented future leaders. The vast majority of these corps members will remain in the classroom for at least two years and consistently advance their students' achievement at the level of our nation's most effective teachers in 43 low-income rural and urban communities across the country, providing talent and leadership where it is needed most.

At the same time, an ever-expanding force of over 24,000 Teach For America alumni will provide critical leadership in classrooms, schools, and districts, and in the broader nonprofit, policy, and business community – including about 8,000 teachers and more than 660 school and school system leaders. Still other alumni will drive innovations from inside and outside the education system – as political leaders and policymakers, social entrepreneurs, journalists, advocates, and civic leaders in all sectors. As a group, our alumni will be moving the needle in closing the achievement gap, changing the conversation about what is possible and how to achieve it, and working alongside many others to move our nation closer to the day when all children have access to an excellent education. And this project will have continued to expand the pipeline of long-term teachers and leaders who will be increasing learning amongst and raising the expectations for high-need students for many, many years to come.