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# Raising Student Achievement: Teach For America



# Who We Are

Teach For America is the national corps of outstanding recent college graduates who commit two years to teach in low-income communities and become life-long leaders for expanding educational opportunity.

## Over 450,000 students reached across 40 regions

- More than 95 percent are people of color
- On average, students begin the year scoring at the 14<sup>th</sup> percentile against the national norm\*
- Three regions currently serve over 14,000 Native students



## 8,500+ corps members and 20,000+ alumni

2010 Corps Statistics → over 45,000 applications for ~4,500 teaching positions

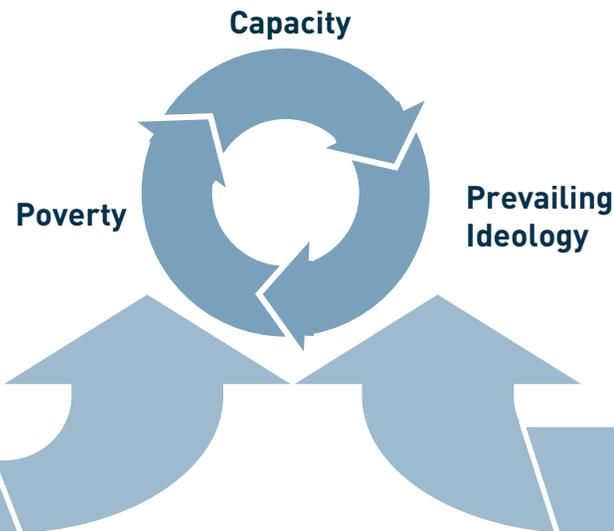
- Average GPA: 3.6
- Average SAT score: 1344
- 11% of all Ivy League seniors applied to TFA in 2009 (15% at Princeton and Yale, 13% at Harvard)
- 25% of Spelman's graduating class applied, and over 35% of African-Americans at Harvard applied as well

\* Source: Mathematica Policy Research

# Our Mission and Theory of Change

Our mission is to enlist our nation's most promising future leaders in the movement to eliminate educational inequity.

## Underlying Causes of the Problem



## Our Theory of Change

**Recruit, select, prepare and develop** outstanding recent graduates of all majors and career interests to commit two years to teach in urban and rural public schools – where they adopt a goal-oriented approach and go above and beyond traditional expectations to help students overcome the challenges of poverty despite the current capacity of the school system.

**The experience of succeeding in the classroom transforms our corps members into outcome-oriented alumni agents of change on behalf of low-income students.**

**Alumni become leaders in education and across all sectors,** attacking the challenges of poverty and building school system capacity.

**Collectively, alumni contribute to changing the prevailing ideology** by bringing hope about what is possible and perspective on what it will take to close the achievement gap.

# Rigorous studies show that Teach For America teachers raise student achievement

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- An intensive, [six-year study](#) of North Carolina's teachers found that Teach For America corps members were, on average, **more effective** than non-Teach For America teachers in **all subject areas**, and especially in math and science. The **positive impact of having a Teach For America teacher was two or three times that of having a teacher with three or more years of experience** relative to a new teacher.
- A [2010 study by the Tennessee State Board of Education](#) evaluated 40 college and university teacher preparation programs and found that **Teach For America was the only organization to train beginning teachers who led students to significant positive gains in every subject area**. On average, students in classrooms taught by Teach For America teachers scored higher than other students, including those taught by veteran teachers, in Reading, Science, and Social Studies.
- Teach For America would welcome a similar analysis of teacher impact in New Mexico. Teach For America teachers currently reach approximately 20% of Native American students in New Mexico public schools, helping to push the consistent statewide increase in Native achievement. Results from the 2010 New Mexico Standards Based Assessment show that **Teach For America's middle school teachers led students to average proficiency gains of 9 to 16 percent, compared to the statewide growth rate of 1 to 3 percent**.

The most rigorous studies consistently show that Teach For America teachers' impact exceeds that of both beginning and experienced teachers in the same schools.

# Last year, four Teach For America teachers led their students to the greatest proficiency gains in the state

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• In February 2011, the New Mexico Public Education Department analyzed results from the 2010 Standards Based Assessment (NMSBA) to identify the schools that made the most growth in the state in each subject and grade level. The PED recognized two schools in Teach For America's placement area for their tremendous growth. **In all four cases, the students' proficiency growth was the greatest in the state, and in all four cases, the students had a Teach For America teacher.**

• Amanda Markey, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Math, Tse'Yi'Gai High School. Amanda's students grew from 0% proficient to 40.9% proficient in math, the most high school math growth in the state.

• Gwyn Raisner, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade English, Navajo Middle School. Gwyn's students grew from 24% proficient to 70.3% proficient in reading, the most 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading growth in the state.

• Kyle Guillet, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Math, Navajo Middle School. Kyle's students grew from 18% proficient to 56.8% proficient in math, the most 8<sup>th</sup> grade math growth in the state.

• JT Erbaugh, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Science, Navajo Middle School. JT's students grew from 20% proficient to 51.4% proficient in science, the most 8<sup>th</sup> grade science growth in the state.

Data from the New Mexico Public Education Department shows that many of the most effective teachers in the state are Teach For America corps members.

# Teach For America Teachers stay in education at a higher rate than other new teachers

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- **Teach For America corps members are more likely than other new teachers to return for a second year of teaching.** Ninety-two percent of the 2008 corps returned for a second year of teaching. In contrast, about 82 percent of new teachers in low-income communities and 86 percent of all new teachers return for a second year.
- **Many alumni teach for a third year and beyond.** A recent study by researchers at Harvard University found that 61 percent of Teach For America corps members stay in teaching beyond the two-year commitment. Nearly half (48 percent) of Teach For America's 2008 corps members remained in New Mexico to teach for a third year.
- **The majority of Teach For America alumni remain in the education field.** Nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of alumni are in the field of education (including K-12 teaching). Nationally, approximately 460 alumni serve as principals, district leaders, charter school founders, superintendents, and chancellors.
- **100 Teach For America alumni are working across New Mexico today.** 57 are teaching in the Four Corners area, Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and Las Cruces. 67 continue to work in the education field.

Teach For America strives to keep teachers in New Mexico, and data shows that corps members remain in teaching for two years at a higher rate than other new teachers.

# Teach For America works closely with New Mexico schools and communities to meet their unique needs

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- Teach For America partners with Americans For Indian Opportunity to ensure that **teachers practice culturally responsive instruction that meets Native students' needs.**
- Through its **Native Achievement Initiative**, Teach For America refines its training model, expands its impact to serve more Native communities, and actively recruits Native leaders from New Mexico to join Teach For America.
- Teach For America **provides professional development to teachers, staff members, and aides in local school districts – at no cost to the districts** - in order to share best practices.
- Teach For America **teachers enroll in New Mexico institutions** – including UNM, Western, Santa Fe Community College, and San Juan College – to develop their instructional methods.
- Teach For America **collaborates with communities to build solutions to educational issues unique to this area.** In October, Teach For America hosted a **Tribal Outreach Summit** with leaders from over half of New Mexico's tribes. In February, Teach For America co-sponsored a **Special Education Summit** with 150 stakeholders. And in May, Teach For America co-hosted (with UNM, NACA and others) the **first-annual Four Corners Education Conference** to unite teachers, administrators, parents, political leaders, and other community members.

Teach For America's teachers and alumni care deeply about New Mexico's students, and partner with schools and communities to help improve educational outcomes for kids.