

Date of Hearing: March 27, 2019

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
Patrick O'Donnell, Chair  
AB 221 (Cristina Garcia) – As Introduced January 16, 2019

**SUBJECT:** Teach for America teachers: assignment prohibition in low-income schools

**SUMMARY:** Prohibits, commencing with the 2020–21 school year, a Teach for America (TFA) teacher from being assigned to teach at any California public school, including a charter school, that enrolls 40 percent or more of its pupils from low-income families; and, specifies that this requirement does not apply to a TFA teacher's placement at a school before the start of the 2020–21 school year.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Defines “fully prepared teacher” as an individual who has completed a teacher preparation program. (Education Code 44225.7)
- 2) Establishes the district intern credential, which is valid for a period of two years. The Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) requires each applicant for a district intern credential to demonstrate that they meet all of the following minimum qualifications for that credential:
  - a) The possession of a baccalaureate degree conferred by a regionally accredited institution of postsecondary education.
  - b) The successful passage of the state basic skills proficiency requirement.
  - c) The successful completion of the appropriate subject matter examination administered by the commission, or a commission-approved subject matter preparation program for the subject areas in which the district intern is authorized to teach. (Education Code 44325)
- 3) Authorizes employing agencies to request the Multiple Subject, Single Subject or Education Specialist Short-Term Staff Permit when there is an acute staffing need. Requires the employing agencies to demonstrate that applicants for the Short-Term Staff Permit have completed all of the following requirements:
  - a) Possession of a baccalaureate or higher degree from a regionally accredited college or university.
  - b) Meet the basic skills requirement.
  - c) Successful completion of the specified number of semester units, or equivalent quarter units, of appropriate non-remedial course work taken at a regionally accredited college or university with a grade of “C” or higher, “Pass”, or “Credit.”
  - d) For the Single Subject Short-Term Staff Permit, at least 18 semester units of course work in the subject to be listed.

- e) For the Multiple Subject Short-Term Staff Permit, at least 10 semester units of course work in each of at least four of the following subject areas, or at least 10 semester units of course work in each of three subject areas and an additional 10 semester units of course work in a combination of two of the remaining subject areas. The subject areas are as follows: language studies, history, literature, humanities, mathematics, the arts, science, physical education, social science and human development. (California Title V Regulations Section 80021)
- 4) Authorizes the CTC to approve a school district request for the assignment of an individual whom does not meet the minimum credentialing requirements or who holds an emergency permit if the district has certified by an annual resolution of the governing board that it has made reasonable efforts to recruit a fully prepared teacher for the assignment. Specifies that if a suitable individual who meets the priorities listed is not available to the school district, the district, as a last resort, may request approval for the assignment of a person who does not meet those criteria. Requires that if a suitable, fully prepared teacher is not available to a school district, the district under all circumstances make reasonable efforts to recruit an individual for the assignment, in the following order:
- a) A candidate who is qualified to participate and enrolls in an approved internship program in the region of the school district.
  - b) A candidate who is scheduled to complete preliminary credential requirements within six months. Requires the CTC to assure that the employer will provide orientation, guidance, and assistance to the candidate. (Education Code 44225.7)
- 5) Requires, as the supply of fully prepared teachers increases as a result of the Legislature's efforts to recruit and retain qualified teachers for California classrooms, the CTC to notify school districts that state policy directs the assignment of fully prepared teachers to California classrooms, with the use of permits or waivers only when school districts are geographically isolated from teacher preparation programs or in the case of unanticipated, short-term need for the assignment of personnel. (Education Code 44225.7)
- 6) Establishes the Alternative Certification Grant Program to incentivize school districts to create district intern credential programs. Specifies that in order to continue to receive increased program funding, a school district or county office of education show annually to the CTC that no high-priority school, as described in Section 52055.605, will have a higher percentage of teacher interns than the districtwide average of teacher interns at a school in that year. (Education Code 44387)

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown

**COMMENTS:** This bill prohibits TFA corps member teachers (those in their first and second year of TFA) from being placed in schools with high percentages of low income students. In considering this measure as a statewide policy, there are multiple data to consider with regard to teacher effectiveness, attrition, ethnic diversity, and cost.

This analysis will discuss the following questions:

- What does research say about teacher effectiveness among new teachers?
- What does research say about Teach for America attrition rates?

- What does research say about the effect of teacher turnover on students?
- What does research say about teacher diversity?
- What does research say about the cost of Teach for America teachers?

**According to the Author:** “Title 1 funded school children already face multiple disadvantages because of their ethnicity, zip code and socio-economic status that are further compounded when you have an inexperienced educator in the classroom. I’ve been that new teacher – I’ve seen how my own inabilities affected my students. And I saw how much my skillset and effectiveness changed once I had received the proper training and got a mentor. We must remove barriers to quality education for our most vulnerable students and not add problems that contribute to our achievement gap and create systemic inequities that follow kids their entire lives.

Every student, no matter what zip code they reside in, should have access to a quality education. Sending underqualified teachers to poor communities perpetuates longstanding inequality in our public schools. Ensuring equity in education is a necessary component to narrowing the existing achievement gap. The answer to closing the gap is not by placing TFA Corps members, who lack formal training or preparation, in our low-income schools. The solution must be to increase support for our teacher workforce and to populate our low-income schools with qualified teachers.

The purpose of Title I designation is to address systemic educational challenges facing high-poverty communities by providing additional resources to schools with high concentrations of poverty. Our most vulnerable communities should not be the testing ground for TFA Corps members. Our students, particularly students of color who have been disadvantaged by TFA teachers who are not adequately prepared, deserve better.”

**Credential Types:** The main types of credentials that place untrained and underqualified teachers in the classroom include short term staff permits (STSPs), provisional intern permits (PIPs), and intern credentials. STSPs and PIPs require the educator to have a baccalaureate degree, satisfy the basic skills requirement (math and English, which can be satisfied via several routes-CBEST, SAT scores, ACT scores, etc.), and demonstrate subject matter knowledge (transcripts showing that they have a certain number of units in the subject area.) There is no specific teacher preparation required. STSPs and PIPs are valid for one year, and they are not renewable. Intern credentials have the same requirements (degree, basic skills, subject matter), but also require a course on the U.S. Constitution and 120 hours of preparation prior to entering a classroom as a teacher of record. In addition, an intern must receive a minimum of 144 hours of support from a mentor teacher during the school year. An intern also participates in coursework after school hours in order to complete their program of preparation. Intern credentials are good for two years, and upon successful completion, the intern becomes eligible for a preliminary credential.

TFA corps member teachers working in California classrooms serve on intern credentials issued through a CTC-accredited teacher credentialing program and must meet the same requirements as other intern teachers.

**Teacher Effectiveness among New Teachers:** Numerous peer-reviewed studies illustrate that teachers improve their effectiveness rapidly over the first few years of teaching. Based on the following data that overwhelmingly show that teachers improve their practice over time, **the Committee should consider** whether a TFA teacher’s two year commitment to teach in low

income schools is enough time to master high quality, effective instructional techniques to benefit the students at those schools.

This analysis represents a review of the peer-reviewed and independent research, and program evaluations sponsored by TFA. When data is presented that is not independent or peer reviewed, it is so noted.

- Kini and Podolsky, 2016: “Based on our review of 30 studies published within the last 15 years that analyze the effect of teaching experience on student outcomes in the United States and met our methodological criteria, we find that: 1. Teaching experience is positively associated with student achievement gains throughout a teacher’s career ... 2. As teachers gain experience, their students not only learn more, as measured by standardized tests, they are also more likely to do better on other measures of success, such as school attendance ...”

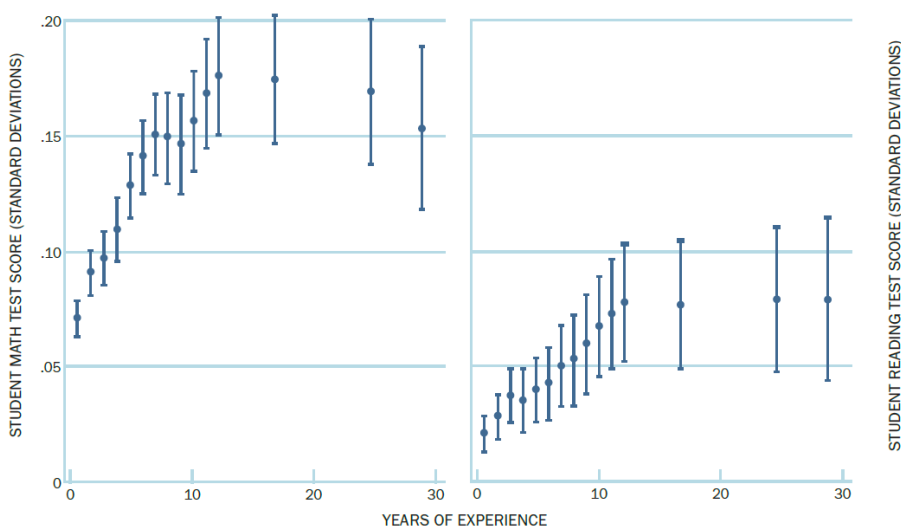
“Teachers make the steepest gains in effectiveness during their first few years in the classroom, when they are “greenest.” Numerous studies confirm the unremarkable finding that, on average, brand new teachers are less effective than those with some experience. Most of these studies also find that teachers show the greatest gains from experience during their initial years in the classroom, but continue to make meaningful improvement in their effectiveness past these initial gains. Teachers who received little hands-on training prior to entering the classroom—such as those who come through alternative routes to certification without completing student teaching or a residency under the guidance of an accomplished teacher—may experience the steepest gains in their initial years in the classroom as they are starting from zero.”

- Ladd, Sorensen, 2015: “The findings for student test scores challenge the conventional wisdom that teachers essentially stop improving after the first few years of teaching. Instead, teachers continue to develop long into their teaching careers. The findings related to absenteeism, and the suggestive evidence for other behaviors, show that experience can be beneficial to students in ways other than simply developing their cognitive skills.” The following graph demonstrates these findings:

### The Relationship of Teacher Experience to Math & Reading Test Score Gains

Test Score Results: Math

Test Score Results: Reading



- Papay, Kraft, 2014: “Like past researchers, and consistent with theory, we find that teachers in the district improve most rapidly at the beginning of their careers. However, across models, we find that teachers continue to improve, albeit at lesser rates, past their first five years in the classroom. We also find suggestive evidence of continued returns to experience throughout the career, particularly in mathematics.”
- Heilig and Jez, 2014: “An additional finding of virtually all of the studies we reviewed in 2010, and of the 2013 Mathematica study, is that, on average, TFA teachers and non-TFA teachers grow more effective with experience, with a major incremental increase in effectiveness after the second year of teaching. Hence, pathways to teaching that are designed for teachers to stay in teaching longer should, on balance, have an additional positive effect on student achievement.

The question for most districts is whether TFA teachers do as well as or better than fully credentialed non-TFA teachers with whom school districts aim to staff their schools. The addition of the 2013 Mathematica report to the conversation about the efficacy of TFA actually underscores our 2010 conclusions, after reviewing the relevant peer-reviewed research, that TFA’s impact on achievement is affected by the experience level of the TFA teachers and the group of teachers with whom they are compared. Studies have consistently found that, when the comparison group is *other teachers in the same schools who are less likely to be fully certified*, novice TFA teachers perform equivalently in raising reading and math scores, while experienced TFA teachers perform equivalently in raising reading scores and only slightly better in raising math scores. Thus, most peer reviewed studies indicate that the students of novice TFA teachers perform significantly lower in reading and mathematics than those of fully credentialed beginning teachers—except at the secondary level.

A review of all of the peer-reviewed research examining the impact of TFA on student achievement over the past decade—outlined in this brief and our prior one—clearly shows that TFA teachers are not decidedly or substantially better than non-TFA teachers.”

- Heilig and Jez, 2010: “Generally, the studies reviewed found that TFA teachers usually showed a positive impact on student achievement in mathematics relative to the comparison group only when they had obtained training and certification in their second and later years in the classroom. They rarely had a positive impact on reading achievement, and four peer-reviewed studies found novice TFA recruits to have significant negative effects on elementary students’ reading achievement compared with fully prepared teachers. These negative effects for TFA beginners extended to mathematics in three of the studies.”
- Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, Heilig, 2005: “As alternative pathway teachers become more expert, students and schools gain benefits only if the teachers stay in the schools that have invested in their training. Cost-effective recruitment programs that increase the share of prepared teachers students ultimately encounter will likely need to recruit candidates with the expectation of a longer teaching commitment than the two years TFA candidates currently pledge. The North Carolina Teaching Fellows program, for example, recruits high-ability students into teacher education by providing service scholarships that cover the full costs of high quality pre-service training, repaid by at least 4 years of service in public schools. An evaluation found more than 75% still teaching after seven years, and many of the remainder were still in public schools as administrators.”

Teach for America provided the following independent studies as evidence of TFA teacher effectiveness:

- Wright, Farmer, Kara, Zannou, Ware, 2019: A study comparing TFA alumni (in year 3 or later of teaching) states, “Compared to brand new TFA corps members and all corps members, TFA alumni offer the best advantage to students in terms of academic outcomes, underscoring the importance of retaining alumni as classroom teachers. Students of TFA alumni are 7.2% more likely, on average, to meet state standards than students of comparable veteran non-TFA-affiliated teachers. This likelihood is followed by brand new corps members in their first year (0.3% advantage). There is relatively no advantage of TFA for all corps members (0.1% difference), indicating that a student of a TFA corps member is as likely to meet state standards as a student of a novice non-TFA-affiliated teacher. This same trend is true across all Texas geographic regions included in the study, all content areas, all student groups (including race/ethnicity, LEP and economic disadvantage), and school types (charter/traditional, met standard/did not meet).”
- Mathematica, 2013: “On average, students assigned to TFA teachers had higher math scores at the end of the school year than students assigned to teachers from other routes to certification. Being taught by a TFA teacher boosted students’ math scores by 0.07 standard deviations—for comparison, this is about the same size as the achievement gain we would expect to see if the average secondary student nationwide received an additional 2.6 months of math instruction.”
- SDP Human Capital Diagnostic, 2012: “Teach for America and Career Ladder teachers have higher math effects on average than other novices in their first year by 0.05 and 0.03 standard deviations respectively, which is roughly equivalent to one to two months of additional learning.”

Teach for America provided the following report, which was sponsored by TFA:

- Mathematica, 2017: “First and second year Teach for America corps members recruited and trained during the Investing in Innovation scale-up were as effective as other teachers in the same high-poverty schools in teaching both reading and math. TFA teachers in lower elementary grades had a positive, statistically significant effect on students’ reading achievement of 0.12 standard deviations, or about 1.3 additional months of learning for the average student in these grades nationwide.”

***Teach for America Attrition Rates:*** Multiple studies find that untrained teachers leave the teaching profession at higher rates than fully prepared teachers. The studies below specifically illustrate the attrition rates for TFA teachers, who are considered to be untrained teachers, as they have not completed a pre-service teacher preparation program prior to entering the classroom as the teacher of record.

- Donaldson and Johnson, 2011: In a survey of TFA alumni, “The majority (56.59%) of those in the sample indicated that, when they applied to TFA, they had planned to teach for two years or less. Such intentions were especially apparent for nearly one-tenth (9.28%) of the sample who had applied to graduate school in another field and then deferred their enrollment for two years while teaching in TFA.

In addition to the lack of training and preparation of TFA Corps members, research examining TFA in localities nationwide provide clear evidence that TFA teachers have high attrition rates. The attrition rate for TFA teachers appears to increase as time progresses. A nationwide 2007 study of 2000, 2001, and 2002 TFA cohorts found that 60.5% of the participants surveyed continue to teach beyond their two-year commitment. However, after their fifth year, only 27.8% were still teaching, compared to the 50% estimated for new teachers across all types of schools.

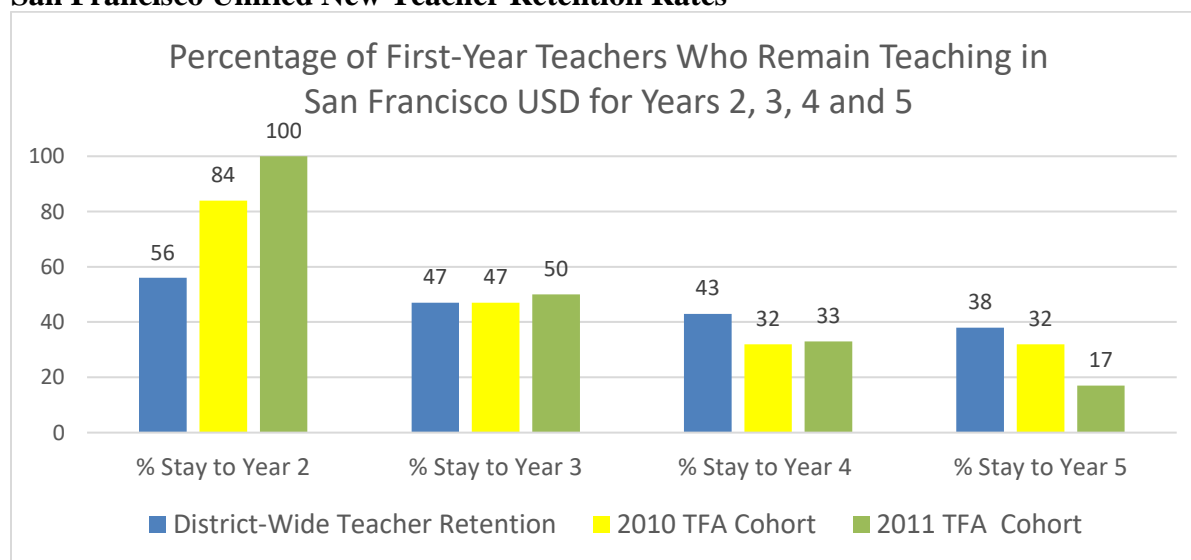
Most people would be surprised to learn that a substantial percentage of TFA teachers — 43.6% remained in their initial, low-income placement school beyond their two-year obligation. However, many individuals who stayed in teaching did leave their original placement schools at some point. About half of those who remained in teaching after their third year had changed schools. And, after the fourth year, only 14.8% continued to teach in their original school. This level of turnover is very problematic from the perspective of low-income schools and their students.”

- Heilig and Jez, 2010: “*Houston, TX*: A study of Houston primary grade teachers from 1996-2002 – of teachers who entered the Houston schools in 1998, 85% of TFA teachers had left after three years, compared with 45% on non-TFA teachers.”

“*New York, NY*: A study of math and science teachers in grades 3-8, from 2003-2008 – by the fourth year of experience, 85% of TFA teachers had left the district, compared to 37% attrition for the traditionally educated teachers; alternatively phrased, only 15% of TFA teachers remained, while 63% of the college educated teachers stayed.”

“High teacher turnover rates do not help our struggling schools and students – these communities will spend precious resources on finding new teachers to replace the TFA teachers who leave the profession.”

### San Francisco Unified New Teacher Retention Rates



According to data provided by TFA, there have been 7,100 TFA teachers placed in California schools since 1990. Between 2006 and 2016, approximately 88% of TFA teachers completed their two year commitment, as documented in the following table:

**TFA Retention Rates in Year 1 & Year 2**

	# Started	# Completed Year 1	% Completed Year 1	# Started Year 2	% Started Year 2	# Completed Year 2	% Completed Year 2
<b>2006-California 2016</b>	3899	3682	94.4%	3485	89.4%	3430	88.0%

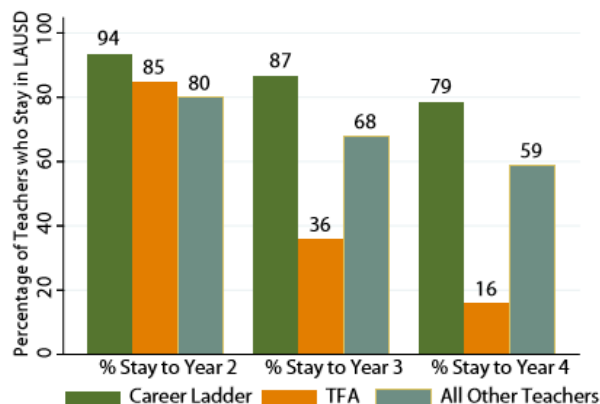
TFA reports that of the 7,100 TFA teachers placed in California since 1990, about 56%, or 3,950 currently reside in California. Currently, 6,700 TFA teachers that completed their 2 year commitment, either in California or in another state, reside in California. Of these 6,700 TFA completers who reside in California, 31.5% or 2,111 are currently working in K-12 education as teachers or instructional leaders.

Teach for America provided the following independent study with regard to TFA teacher attrition:

- SDP Human Capital Diagnostic, 2012: The following graph from this study demonstrates the attrition rates among TFA teachers in Los Angeles Unified School District.

Figure 4: Percentage of First-Year Teachers Who Remain Teaching in LAUSD for Years 2, 3, and 4

Novice Teachers, 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07 Cohorts



Teach for America provided the following report, which was sponsored by TFA:

- Rand, 2018: In their survey of school principals sponsored by TFA, “A majority of principals would hire or recommend hiring a TFA corps member in the future. Still, when considering future hiring decisions, more than one-quarter of principals voiced concerns about corps members’ classroom management skills and the short amount of time they commit to teaching under the TFA program (two years).”

**Effect of Teacher Turnover on Students:** Research has established that teacher preparation and certification are by far the strongest correlates of student achievement in reading and



mathematics, even when controlling for student poverty and language status. (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

The intersection between high poverty schools, new teachers and high turnover is notable. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2000), new teachers tend to be concentrated in high poverty schools. High poverty schools experience high turnover rates - on average losing over 20% of their faculty each year (Ingersoll, 2004). According to the Education Commission of the States (2005), “there is strong evidence that teacher attrition is most severe among beginning teachers.”

A study by Ronfeldt, Loeb and Wyckoff in 2012 finds, “Teacher turnover has a significant and negative impact on student achievement in both math and ELA. Moreover, teacher turnover is particularly harmful to the achievement of students in schools with large populations of low-performing and Black students.”

***Diversity among Teach for America Teachers:*** TFA suggests that their corps member teachers are more diverse than the traditional teaching pool. The following chart illustrates the ethnic diversity among Teacher for America corps members in 2017 compared to state-wide data on district interns. While TFA recruits more African American teachers than district intern programs, district intern programs recruit more Hispanic teachers.

**Teacher Ethnicity among Teach for America Compared to District Intern Programs**

	Teach for America 2017	California District Intern Programs 2016-17
White	51%	53%
African American	17%	7%
Hispanic	14%	29%
Asian	6%	7%
Muliethnic/Multiracial	6%	2%

Source: TFA 2017 Annual Report & Commission on Teacher Credentialing

The following is data from specific school districts in California that have reported the ethnic diversity of their TFA teachers.

Straubhaar and Gottfried, 2016: “A 2014 study of Los Angeles TFA teachers affirms the lack of diversity in its Corps members. The study found the majority of TFA Corps members continue to come from privileged backgrounds in terms of race and social class, and most of them enter TFA as an interim job that provides time to think through their long-term goals. Specifically, most participants in the study (64% or 16 of 25) are Caucasian and describe themselves as coming from middle – or upper-class backgrounds. Five of nine participants who are teachers of color, six self-identify as coming from middle – or upper-class homes, which means that only 12% of the participants in this study (3 out of 25) come from a racial and socioeconomic background that mirrors the low-income communities of color in which TFA teachers work.”

**District Specific TFA Ethnicity Data**

District	Race/Ethnicity of TFA Teachers						
	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	Filipino	Native Hawaiian or PIS	White	Other
<b>Reef-Sunset USD</b> 2018-19 School Year	1	0	5	0	0	7	0
<b>West Contra Costa County USD</b> 2018-19 School Year	7	5	0	1	0	22	1
<b>Oakland USD</b> 2014-15 School Year	10	12	7	1	0	20	0

**Cost of Teach for America Teachers:** According to TFA, the average fee that California school districts pay TFA is \$4,300 for each year of employment, as a type of recruitment or finder’s fee, in addition to the teacher’s salary. This means school districts pay, on average \$8,600 above the teacher’s salary to have a TFA teacher in their district for two years of service. In most cases, this fee is paid at the beginning of the year, and is not refundable if the teacher does not complete the year of employment for any reason. Some school districts pay Teach for America as much as \$5,000 per teacher for each year of employment, though it is unclear how many California districts pay this amount.

According to the 2010 study by Heilig and Jez, “Despite the hundreds of millions of dollars that TFA has garnered over the past decade, districts that hire TFA teachers are contractually required to pay several thousand dollars per year to TFA for each teacher placed. Once hired, districts pay TFA teachers the same salary as other teachers in the district with the same education and years of experience; however, unlike their peers who graduated from traditional teaching preparation programs, TFA recruits also receive additional compensation from the federal government in the form of AmeriCorps stipends to assist with student loans or continuing education.”

**Service Commitment at District Intern Programs:** Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) operates a district intern credentialing program. LAUSD provides the intern credential preparation program to the credential candidate at no cost to the teacher. In exchange, LAUSD asks that the teacher agree to teach in the district during the two year credential program, plus commit to teach in the district for two additional years after they obtain their Preliminary credential. This means the intern credential candidate agrees to a four year service commitment.

**Researcher Recommendation:** According to Heilig and Jez, 2010, policy makers and school districts should consider pressing for a “five-year commitment to improve achievement and reduce re-staffing.”

**Arguments in Support:** According to California National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), “We should not allow California’s children – particularly those who are most socio-economically disadvantaged – to be taught by individuals with exceedingly limited training and no long-term commitment to the classroom, schools and communities. The

practice of placing highly-unqualified individuals in positions of professional responsibility would never be tolerated in other sectors (i.e. Lawyers, Doctors), regardless of the volunteer's good intentions. The California NAACP supports parents and other stakeholders who desire a certified, highly qualified teacher who has completed their training for every student in their neighborhood public schools and is committed to encouraging state and local policymakers to publicly support a moratorium on the placement of TFA in socio-economically disadvantaged schools.”

**Arguments in Opposition:** According to Teach for America California, “Local school leaders understand the needs of their students and communities. They make hiring decisions based on those needs and the best talent available. Currently, public school districts and public charter networks can choose to enter a contractual relationship with Teach For America that allows them to interview candidates for open teaching roles with no obligation to hire them. AB 221 undermines this local control and choice, removes a pipeline of credentialed teacher candidates from hiring consideration, and is counter to the California way. No school leaders are forced to work with Teach For America, and no school leaders should be prohibited from accessing our talent pool.”

**Committee Amendments:** To maximize the number of effective years of teaching provided to students by teachers hired in collaboration with a third party organization, *staff recommends* the bill be amended to delete the references to Teach For America in the bill and instead:

- 1) Prohibit school districts, county offices of education and charter schools from entering into a contract with a third party organization:
  - a) To employ teachers who commit to teaching in the organization for less than five years.
  - b) To employ teachers at a Title 1 school.
  - c) To pay a recruitment fee when hiring teachers, consistent with an employment agency.
- 2) Specify that this measure does not apply to a teacher's placement at a school described above before the start of the 2020–21 school year.

## **REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

### **Support**

California State Conference Of The National Association For The Advancement Of Colored People (NAACP)  
The Network For Public Education

### **Opposition**

Alliance Cindy And Bill Simon Technology Academy High School  
Alliance College-Ready Public Schools  
Alliance Luskin Academy  
Alpha Public Schools  
Association Of California School Administrators  
Association Of Latino Administrators And Superintendents  
Caliber Schools  
California Business Roundtable  
California Charter Schools Association  
California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (Ccsesa)

Camino Nuevo Charter Academy  
Crown Family Philanthropies  
East Side Union High School District  
Ednovate, Inc.  
Edvoice  
Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (Epic)  
Environmental Charter Schools  
Fresno Unified School District  
Go Public Schools  
Great Public Schools Now  
Green Dot Public Schools California  
Icef Public Schools  
Kipp La Public Schools  
Kipp Prize Preparatory Academy  
Kipp: Bay Area Public Schools  
Leap (Leadership Education For Asian Pacifics)  
Loyola Marymount School Of Education  
Manhattan Beach USD  
P.S. 305  
Para Los Ninos  
Parent Revolution  
Partnership For Los Angeles Schools  
Peres K-8 School  
Powermylearning  
Speak Up  
State Farm Los Angeles  
Stem To The Future  
Stockton Unified School District  
Teach For America California  
Teach Plus  
The Education Trust - West  
Valiente College Preparatory Charter School  
Vista Unified School District  
Wiseburn Unified School District  
Youth Policy Institute  
Numerous Individuals

**Analysis Prepared by:** Chelsea Kelley / ED. / (916) 319-2087