

## **CLEAR FUND**

**Grant Application – Round 1  
Teach For America • New York City  
August 3, 2007**

**TEACHFORAMERICA**

## **I. LIST OF PROGRAMS (ONE PAGE MAXIMUM)**

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Teach For America's mission is to build the movement to eliminate educational inequity by enlisting our nation's most promising future leaders in the effort. We seek to accomplish this mission by building a diverse, highly selective corps of outstanding recent college graduates—of all academic majors and career interests—who commit two years to teach in urban and rural public schools in our nation's lowest-income communities and become lifelong leaders for expanding educational opportunity.

Socioeconomic challenges in low-income communities—such as inadequate housing, healthcare, and preschool opportunities—put added pressure on schools that generally do not have the systems, capacity, and resources to compensate. Teach For America believes that in order to overcome these underlying challenges in the short term, we need as many teachers as possible willing to go above and beyond the constraints of the system to ensure that their students excel. But thousands of hardworking teachers cannot solve the problem on their own. Rather, we must build the capacity of the system to compensate for the broader forces at work. Our alumni address these issues in the classroom and take on the underlying challenges from other sectors like medicine, law, and policy. It is through the combined efforts of our corps members and alumni, and by working alongside others in the communities that we serve, that we will achieve our vision: One day, all children in this nation will have the opportunity to attain an excellent education.

Our programmatic approach calls for Teach For America to recruit, train, place, and support teachers who create classrooms where students are empowered to succeed. Through the work of our corps members and alumni, Teach For America seeks to fundamentally change the status quo. Our theory of change is as follows:

- **In the short term:** Teach For America corps members work relentlessly to ensure that more students growing up in our nation's lowest-income communities have the educational opportunities they deserve; and
- **In the longer term:** Teach For America alumni, fueled by the insight and commitment they gain through their teaching experience, assume leadership positions in every sector to strengthen public education and take the pressure off schools by improving conditions in low-income communities.

New York City is the largest of Teach For America's 26 placement regions, accounting for 25% of our total national teacher corps. Recent years have seen tremendous growth for Teach For America in New York City. As of last fall, nearly 1,000 Teach For America corps members – up from 250 just four years ago – are working to eliminate educational inequity in nearly 300 schools across the Bronx, Washington Heights, Harlem, the Lower East Side, and Brooklyn. These New York City corps members are going above and beyond the constraints of the system in order to meet the needs of approximately 75,000 students to ensure that they excel academically, thus improving their educational and life prospects.

Teach For America's increase in corps size has also allowed us to grow our local alumni force at a greater rate. Our alumni in New York City, now numbering nearly 1,700, are founding and running some of the city's highest performing schools; working in offices throughout the New York City Department of Education ("DOE"); and leading promising education reform efforts. Additionally, they are working in law, media, public policy, business, medicine, and many other sectors to effect the systemic changes needed to achieve educational parity. Most notably: more than 85 alumni are serving as principals, assistant principals, and principals-in-training; nearly 20 alumni work in key positions at the DOE, including the posts of Superintendent of District 79 and Chief-of-Staff to the Deputy Chancellor of Teaching and Learning; and alumni are leading 30% of all charter schools across the city.

## **II. POPULATION SERVED BY FEATURED PROGRAM (ONE PAGE MAXIMUM)**

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The educational inequity that persists along socio-economic and racial lines is one of our nation's most fundamental challenges. Statistics tell us that children growing up in low-income communities simply do not have the same educational prospects as children in more privileged communities. Nine-year-olds growing up in low-income communities are already three grade levels behind their peers in high-income communities; half of them will not graduate from high school, and those who do graduate will, on average, perform in reading and math at the level of eighth graders in high-income communities<sup>1</sup>.

These disparities severely limit the life prospects of the 13 million children growing up in poverty today. Furthermore, because African-American and Latino/Hispanic children are three times as likely to grow up in a low-income area<sup>2</sup>, these disparities also prevent many children of color from truly having equal opportunities in life.

### **The Population Served in New York City**

As in other urban areas across the country, public schools in New York City's most economically under-resourced communities struggle to provide students with the education they deserve. Despite the promise of *Brown v. Board of Education*, enormous disparities in academic outcomes persist along racial and socio-economic lines. According to DOE reports<sup>3</sup> in New York City:

- 40% of students do not graduate on time, and only 25% of African-American and Latino students will ever receive a Regents Diploma; and
- System-wide, more than 40% of students do not meet the standards in Math and English Language Arts; by 8<sup>th</sup> grade, more than 60% of students are below grade level.

The students we serve are largely African-American (37%) and Latino (58%); more than 80% are eligible for the free-lunch program and a high number require special education and/or English Language Learner services.

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<sup>1</sup> National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2005

<sup>2</sup> National Center for Children in Poverty, 2006

<sup>3</sup> Statistics released by the Department of Education as reported in Mayor Bloomberg's *State of the City Address* in January 2007.

### III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES AND BUDGET FOR FEATURED PROGRAM (TWO PAGE MAXIMUM)

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A. Please describe the featured program, focusing on the activities that are carried out (not just the program's goals) and being as *specific* as possible about what problems these activities address.

As mentioned above, Teach For America's mission is to enlist our nation's most promising future leaders to become highly effective teachers and then foster their continued leadership through our alumni program. In order to effect immediate and long term benefits for the students we serve, Teach For America operates a coordinated program continuum consisting of the following elements: recruitment at the nation's top colleges to find talented and diverse graduating seniors with strong academic backgrounds; selection of the top candidates through a rigorous admissions process; teacher preparation through an intensive residential summer institute; local induction and placement of new teachers in the nation's highest-need public schools; provision of ongoing regional support, professional development and partnerships with universities for certification; and, connection to alumni network and to leadership opportunities after their service commitment. More specifically:

**Recruitment.** Because we have found that the personal attributes of recruits are a major determinant of their success as teachers and their impact as alumni, Teach For America places great emphasis on the recruitment process. We target the most highly sought college students of all academic majors and career interests from top colleges – the future leaders of America – who are deeply committed to our mission and who bring the necessary mindset and skills to drive effectively toward our vision.

This year, despite the strongest job market in five years, more than 18,000 graduating seniors and recent graduates competed to join Teach For America, including at least 10 percent of the graduating senior class at Spelman, Duke, Amherst and the University of Chicago, and over 7 percent at Yale and Princeton. We are now one of the 10 largest employers on college campuses nationally and are the top employer at numerous schools. While our 2007 matriculation campaign is still ongoing, we project an incoming corps size of about 1,000 members who will begin teaching this fall in New York City.

**Selection.** Despite a large and growing national teacher corps, Teach For America has maintained the integrity of our selection process as well as our high standards for admission. We select individuals who are highly likely to be leaders in all sectors of society in the course of their careers, both within and outside of education. Those selected to enter Teach For America's corps are among the most highly sought-after graduating college seniors. Specifically, the first-year corps members who began teaching in New York City last fall had an average GPA of 3.57, an average SAT score of 1324, 94% held at least one leadership position in college, and 34% identified as people of color.

**Teacher Training Institute.** Teach For America's pre-service training model is designed to provide corps members with a solid foundation of skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in the classroom. Specifically, the summer institute curriculum is intended to help corps members internalize the overarching approach taken by successful teachers in low-income communities. Pre-service training institute - which takes place over five weeks during the summer and is preceded by extensive pedagogical readings, independent classroom observations, and written reflections - is focused on giving corps members the tools they will need to lead their students to significant academic achievement. During institute, corps members teach in summer school programs run largely by Teach For America, in partnership with the New York City Public Schools.

**Ongoing Support.** Once corps members enter the classroom, Teach For America provides them with a two-year program of teacher support and professional development, including a formal cycle of observations and feedback; data-driven, student-achievement-focused toolkits; and content- and subject-specific professional development workshops. Corps members are guided through this program by Teach For America program directors, all of whom are alumni who successfully led their students to significant academic gains.

Our experience and research has demonstrated that teaching successfully in low-income communities is an act of leadership. Our 17 years of experience in training and preparing corps members for the unique challenges of low-income classrooms has lead Teach For America to develop a highly customized teacher preparation program. This program marries our frontline experiences in low-income communities with research-based best practices and has produced a framework that we call *Teaching As Leadership*. The framework articulates six overarching principles of effective teaching and leadership, further delineates the 27 key teacher actions linked to student achievement, and forms the basis for Teach For America's training and professional development programs.

Within this framework, Teach For America has a deeply outcomes-driven approach to our program and we rigorously track the academic progress of our corps members' students. To measure the success of our corps, we work with corps members to internally measure their students' academic growth at periodic intervals throughout the year, and at the end of each school year. Because we strive to eliminate the achievement gap, it is not enough for our corps members to achieve a single year of growth during the school year. Rather, we set as an ambitious goal for each corps member the achievement of "significant gains" in student learning. Corps members who meet this goal of significant gains are those who are able to demonstrate concrete evidence of closing the achievement gap for their students. While this 'significant gains' measure is not intended to be an externally-validated measure, it enables us to make internal, data-driven programmatic improvements. As a result, we have seen our teachers' impact on student achievement steadily increase over time.

**Alumni Development.** Teach For America believes that by enlisting a critical mass of our nation's future leaders in the pursuit of educational equity, we will change the very consciousness of our country - our national priorities and the prevailing ideology that drive policy and practice - and move us closer to living up to our county's ideals. Our 1,700 New York City, and 12,000 national, alumni form one of the largest networks of education and social reformers in this county. Armed with the insight and deepened commitment gained during their experience as corps members, our alumni continue their work in expanding educational opportunity long after their initial two year commitment ends.

**B. Please provide as detailed and precise a budget as possible (actual from past years, or projected for coming years) indicating how funds are spent within the program.**

Please see APPENDIX I for the New York City Budget for FY2007.

#### **IV. EVALUATION FOR FEATURED PROGRAM (ONE PAGE MAXIMUM, EXCEPT FOR PART B)**

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##### **A. What is your process for evaluating the effects of the featured program on students' abilities to succeed academically?**

Teach For America engages in continuous efforts to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of our program. To measure our impact, we (1) work with third-party research organizations to conduct external studies of our corps members' efficacy both in absolute terms and relative to other teachers; (2) assess principal satisfaction, as measured by a biannual principals survey; and, (3) work with corps members to measure their students' academic growth at periodic intervals throughout the year and at the end of each school year. The following outcomes data is available for our program:

- **External efficacy research.** In 2004, Mathematica Policy Research, an independent research firm, released a significant national evaluation of our program. The Mathematica study concluded that Teach For America corps members' students make 10% more progress in a year in math than is typically expected, while slightly exceeding the normal expectation for progress in reading. The study also found that corps members attain greater gains in math and the same gains in reading compared to the students of other teachers studied, even as compared only to certified teachers and to veteran teachers.

Our research team is currently working to secure new, independent evaluations of our impact.

- **Principal satisfaction.** A biannual survey of principals conducted by Kane, Parsons & Associates, Inc., an independent research firm, has consistently shown that our partner principals are highly satisfied with corps members' performance. According to the 2005 survey of principals who manage Teach For America teachers, principals report that our corps members are well prepared and have a significant and positive impact on their schools and on student achievement:
  - *Quality of Training*
    - Three out of four principals (75 percent) rated Teach For America corps members' training as better than that of other beginning teachers (and almost no one rated their training as less effective).
  - *Impact on Student Achievement*
    - Nearly three out of four principals (74 percent) considered the Teach For America teachers more effective than other beginning teachers with whom they have worked (and most rated corps members as at least equally effective).
    - The majority of principals (63 percent) regarded Teach For America teachers as more effective than the overall teaching faculty, with respect to their impact on student achievement (and nearly none rated them as less effective).

Results of the 2006-07 principal survey are currently being compiled for circulation.

- **Internal assessment of corps member efficacy.** We rigorously track the academic progress of our corps members' students. Our goal is to ensure that, by 2010, 80% of second year corps members and 50% of first year corps are achieving significant academic gains<sup>4</sup> in their classrooms. However, because data for this internal metric is not gathered by a third party, we do not share the results publicly.

##### **B. Please attach any available written reports (whether internal or by independent third parties) about the impact of the featured program on academic performance.**

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<sup>4</sup> We define "significant gains" as achieving an ambitious, comprehensive classroom goal that closes the achievement gap for corps members' students, such as making at least 1.5 years of academic progress in a single year.

Please see **APPENDIX II** for the Mathematica Policy Research Report and **APPENDIX III** for the Principal Satisfaction Survey.

## **V. OPTIONAL: OTHER SUPPORT FOR FEATURED ACTIVITIES (ONE PAGE MAXIMUM)**

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Education research shows that providing high-quality teachers to the communities that need them most is fundamentally important in closing the achievement gap (see 'Good Teaching Matters,' Education Trust; 'Quality Counts 2003,' Education Week). Research consistently demonstrates that good teaching is the single most important factor in student learning and that if schools can get effective teachers to students who need them, the teachers can impact children's life prospects (see 'The Real Value of Value Added', Education Trust, 2004, citing multiple studies). One notable study by prominent education theorists concluded that 'having a high quality teacher throughout elementary school can substantially offset or even eliminate the disadvantage of low socio-economic background' (Rivkin, Hanushek and Kain, 'Teachers, Schools and Academic Achievement,' 2002).

Despite this evidence, low-income students are less likely to get effective teachers in their classrooms than wealthier students by all measures ('The Real Value of Value Added,' 2004). The acute teacher shortage is far worse in high-poverty and high-minority districts (see, e.g., Murphy and DeArmond, 'From the Headlines to the Frontlines: The Teacher Shortage and its Implications for Recruitment Policy,' 2003); and, in addition, low-income children are also far more likely to have teachers who scored poorly on college and licensure exams and who are teaching out of their field of study (Jerald, 'All Talk, No Action: Putting and End to Out-of-Field Teaching,' Education Trust, 2002).



## APPENDICES

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- Appendix I: New York City Budget for FY 2007
- Appendix II: Mathematica Research Report
- Appendix III: 2005 Principal Satisfaction Survey

I. NEW YORK CITY BUDGET FOR FY 2007

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**TEACHFORAMERICA**

**NEW YORK CITY BUDGET**

**FY 2007 (October 1, 2006 - September 30, 2007)**

Expense Category	Recruitment & Selection	Pre-service Training	CM Professional Development	Alumni Program & Support	Local Management and General	Local Development	Regional Share of National Support	Total
Full Time Salaries	\$ 1,770,405	\$ 621,216	\$ 3,473,791	\$ 130,031	\$ 453,140	\$ 700,840	\$ 1,210,175	\$ 8,359,598
Part Time Salaries	17,204	552,358	239,526	1,106	30,905	8,000	15,867	864,965
Communications	76,051	41,689	44,036	2,821	118,103	413	45,982	329,096
Office Supplies & Equipment	17,067	137,377	47,691	-	114,913	51	90,419	407,518
Rent	87,959	61,972	43,430	-	355,142	-	103,834	652,337
Program Materials	72,433	11,265	122,297	-	9,953	-	1,346	217,294
Advertising and PR	66,842	8,013	49,816	261	21,147	-	21,003	167,082
Staff Professional Development	7,328	2,386	20,402	822	21,599	16	45,543	98,097
Travel	287,942	1,595,238	410,791	143	56,719	160	173,776	2,524,769
Research	-	-	21,196	-	-	-	-	21,196
CM Support including Financial Aid	339,194	17,325	289,779	14,445	4,572	-	2,215	667,530
Insurance	8,738	2,913	1,503	2,079	18,715	-	11,229	45,178
Professional Fees	139,795	19,062	158,923	-	-	13,333	211,400	542,513
Other, Incl Depreciation	40,266	12,388	(509)	-	7,100	20	82,989	142,254
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>2,931,225</b>	<b>3,083,202</b>	<b>4,922,672</b>	<b>151,709</b>	<b>1,212,007</b>	<b>722,833</b>	<b>2,015,778</b>	<b>15,039,426</b>
% of Total	19%	21%	33%	1%	8%	5%	13%	100%

## II. MATHEMATICA RESEARCH REPORT

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Contract No.: CAPE 2001-004-01/Carnegie B7302;  
DB7302-R01  
MPR Reference No.: 8792-750

**The Effects of Teach For  
America on Students:  
Findings from a National  
Evaluation**

*Embargoed for Release on  
June 9, 2004*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Teach For America (TFA) was founded in 1989 to address the educational inequities facing children in low-income communities across the United States by expanding the pool of teacher candidates available to the schools those children attend. TFA recruits seniors and recent graduates from colleges around the country, people who are willing to commit to teach for a minimum of two years in low-income schools.

TFA focuses its recruitment on people with strong academic records and leadership capabilities, whether or not they have planned to teach or have taken education courses. TFA is particularly interested in candidates that have the potential to be effective in the classroom but in the absence of TFA would not consider a teaching career. Consequently, most TFA recruits do not have education-related majors in college and therefore have not received the same training that traditional teachers are expected to have.

Although the teacher training TFA provides its recruits is limited in duration, it is quite intensive. Once recruits are accepted into the program, they participate in a five-week TFA summer institute to prepare them for placement in the classroom at the start of the school year. The institute includes courses on teaching practice, classroom management, diversity, learning theory, literacy development, and leadership. During the institute, groups of participants also take full teaching responsibility for four weeks of a class of summer school students. Participants also meet regularly with subject- and grade-specific learning teams and attend various evening workshops, with their progress evaluated through regular assessment and feedback provided by institute faculty. The institute has established a rigorous process for participants. According to TFA, the typical attendee must carry out a number of preliminary assignments and then spend 70 hours a week on institute-related activities during the five weeks. Furthermore, for most TFA corps members, their training continues after they are placed in their classrooms, partly because many states and districts require it.

TFA has been highly successful in attracting applicants that meet its standards, and its numbers have expanded rapidly in recent years. Between 2000 and 2003, the TFA applicant pool grew almost fourfold (from 4,068 to 15,706), and the number of new corps members nearly doubled (from 868 to 1,656). In 2004, the program plans to place corps members in 22 urban and rural regions, an increase from 15 regions served in 2000.

## OBJECTIVE AND DESIGN

Despite TFA's rapid recent expansion, little evidence exists regarding the impact of TFA teachers on student achievement. This report addresses this issue directly by answering the question, Do TFA teachers improve (or at least not harm) student outcomes relative to what would have happened in their absence? Our approach to addressing this question is to compare the outcomes among students taught by TFA teachers with the outcomes of students taught by other teachers *in the same schools and at the same grades*, whom we refer to as "control teachers." We refine this comparison by randomly assigning students to their classrooms prior to the start of the school year to ensure that the TFA and control teachers have essentially identical classes of students.

For our analysis, we defined "control teachers" to include any teacher who was never a TFA corps member. Control teachers therefore included traditionally certified, alternatively certified,

and uncertified teachers—any teacher who came from a source other than TFA. TFA teachers included any teacher that entered teaching through TFA—both current TFA corps members in their first two years of teaching and a small number of former TFA corps members who were still teaching in the schools in our study.

We conducted two types of comparisons of TFA and control teachers. First, we compared classes taught by TFA teachers with classes taught by all control teachers, which could include both novices and veterans. In this case the average years of teaching experience was far higher for the control than for the TFA teachers. To control directly for differences in teaching experience, we conducted a second type of comparison based on classes taught by novice TFA teachers and novice control teachers. (We defined novice teachers as those in their first three years of teaching during the study year.)

The estimates presented in this report reflect the “full” impact of the TFA program, which encompasses both the recruitment effect of TFA on the type of teachers that enter the profession in low-income communities and the effect of the TFA training on program participants. Both these TFA effects may in turn affect student outcomes. Because the two components are integral to the TFA program, our study was not designed to disentangle their separate influences on student outcomes.

The primary student outcomes we examined were based on math and reading tests administered at the beginning and end of the school year. We measured other outcomes by collecting school records and asking teachers to respond to a survey about their own practices and attitudes and their perceptions of the classroom environment.

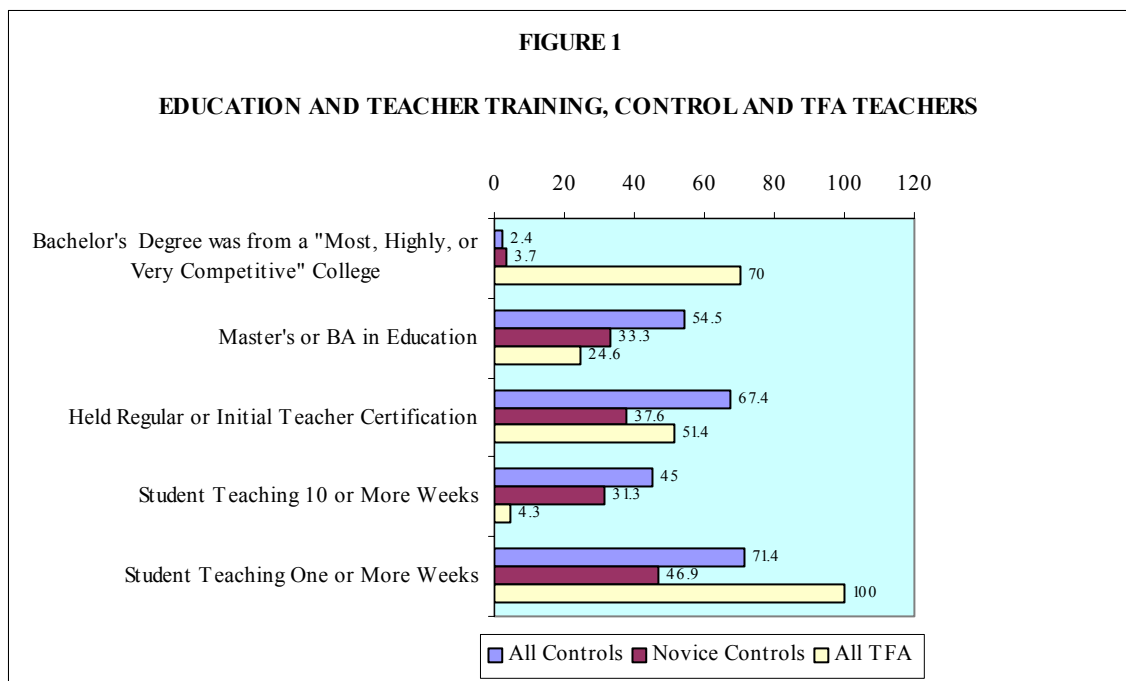
The evaluation was conducted in two stages: a pilot study in one region (Baltimore) during the 2001–2002 school year and a full-scale evaluation in five additional regions (Chicago, Los Angeles, Houston, New Orleans, and the Mississippi Delta) during the 2002–2003 school year. The final sample includes 6 of the 15 regions where TFA placed teachers at the time the study was being designed. To facilitate random assignment, we restricted our study to grades 1 to 5, in which students were typically assigned to self-contained classes for math and reading instruction. The final research sample included 17 schools, 100 classrooms, and nearly 2,000 students. Since TFA places teachers in schools that are generally disadvantaged and face substantial teaching shortages, our study related to these schools, not the average school in the United States.

## **FINDINGS**

Our study sheds light on who teaches in the schools where TFA places teachers, and on the impacts TFA teachers have on student outcomes. The findings for teachers show that TFA produces teachers who differ in some key ways from the other teachers in the same schools. As expected, the TFA teachers in our sample had strong academic backgrounds. Figure 1 shows that over two-thirds of the TFA teachers in our sample graduated from colleges classified as either “most competitive,” “highly competitive,” or “very competitive” by *Barron’s Profile of American Colleges*. This compares with fewer than 4 percent of either all control group teachers or the novice control group teachers that had graduated from colleges ranked at these levels.

On the other hand, TFA teachers had less education-specific training than the control teachers, although the differences between TFA teachers and novice control group teachers were modest. Figure 1 shows that by the end of the study year, about 25 percent of TFA teachers had either a bachelor’s or a master’s degree in education, compared with 55 percent of control group teachers

overall, and 33 percent of the novices. Most TFA teachers earned their education degree while they were teaching—only 3 percent had such a degree when they began teaching. Over 51 percent of the TFA teachers had earned a regular or initial teacher certification by the end of the study year, a figure that was still substantially below the 67 percent for the full control group, although on par with that of the novice control teachers<sup>1</sup>.



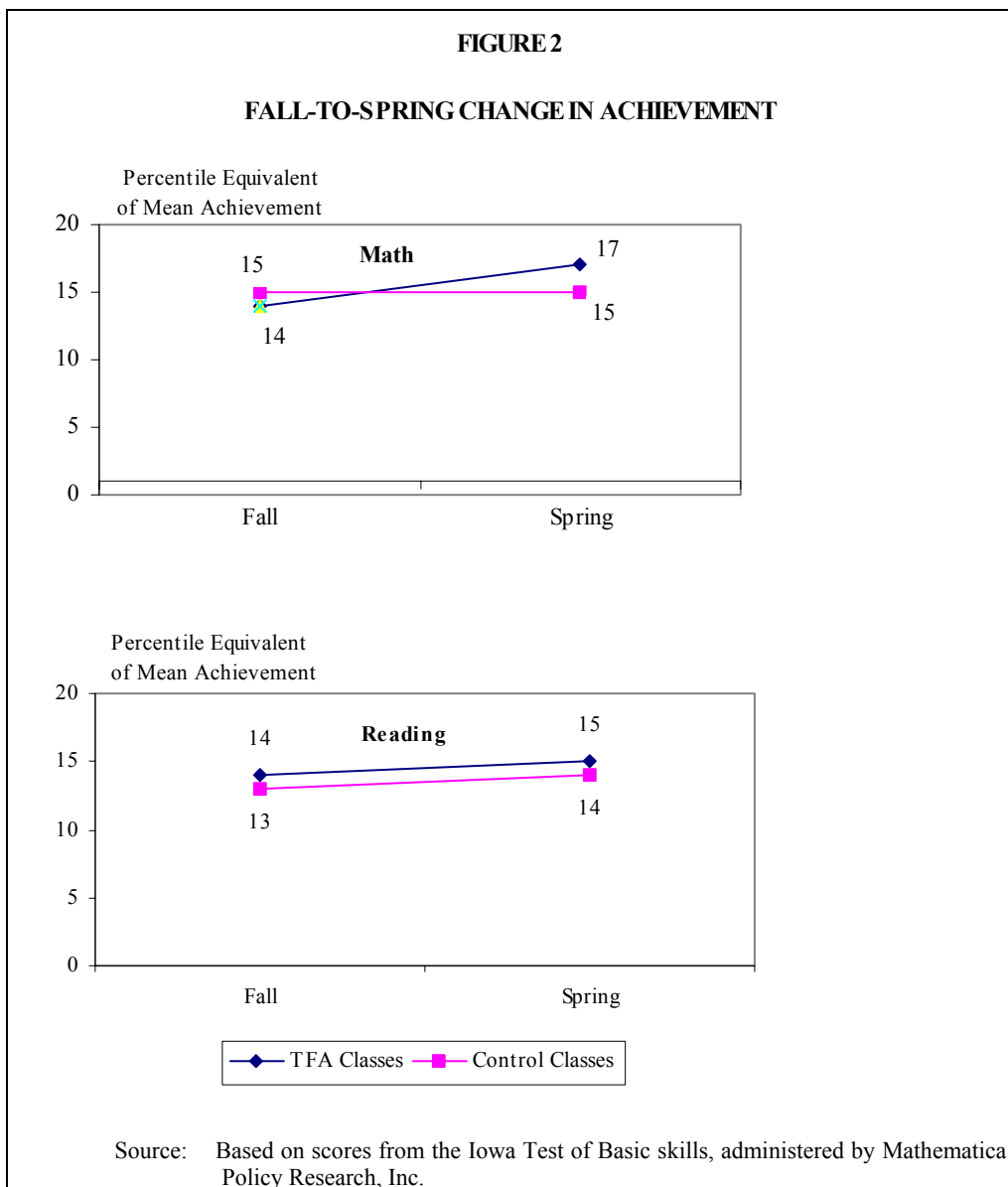
Before beginning their teaching assignment, TFA teachers had less student teaching experience than many of, but by no means all, the control group teachers. Only 4 percent of TFA teachers reported having spent 10 or more weeks student teaching, compared with 45 percent of the control teachers and 31 percent of the novice control teachers (Figure 1). On the other hand, all TFA teachers had at least 4 weeks of student teaching experience from having participated in the summer institute, while many of the control teachers (and over half the novice control teachers) had no student teaching experience at all.

Although these findings reinforce some expectations regarding the differences in teacher preparation between TFA teachers and control teachers, they also show that the control teachers had a mix of backgrounds and teacher preparation. That is, many of the control teachers in the schools in our study, particularly the novice teachers, had not entered teaching through a traditional route in which they were fully trained prior to their entry into the classroom. This finding reflects the situation in the poor schools where TFA places teachers rather than the situation in all schools across the country. Compared with a nationally representative sample of teachers, the control teachers in the schools in our study had substantially lower rates of certification and formal education training.

<sup>1</sup> Although in the aggregate more TFA teachers are certified than novice control teachers (51 percent versus 38 percent), we found that certification varied by district and school. This variation is not surprising, as certification requirements differed by location. Once the TFA sample was limited to those teaching in the same schools and grades as the novice control teachers, the difference in rates of certification (40 percent versus 38 percent) disappeared into statistical insignificance.



Looking at student outcomes, we found that TFA teachers had a positive impact on the math achievement of their students—average math scores were significantly higher among TFA students than among control students. Figure 2 shows the percentile rankings of the average students in TFA and control classrooms at the beginning (fall) and the end (spring) of the school year. For math (shown in the top panel of Figure 2), the average control class student scored in the 15<sup>th</sup> percentile in the fall and remained in the 15<sup>th</sup> percentile at the end of the year. That is, control class students experienced “normal” achievement growth, shown in Figure 2 by a horizontal gray line. In contrast, the average TFA class student increased in rank from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> percentile over the same period. When adjusted using sample weights and regression methods, the difference in the growth rates was statistically significant, which demonstrates that TFA teachers generated larger math achievement gains. This impact is equivalent to an effect size of approximately 0.15 of a standard deviation and translates into roughly 10 percent of a grade equivalent, or about one additional month of math instruction.



TFA teachers did not have an impact on average reading achievement. Students in TFA and control classrooms experienced the same growth rate in reading achievement—an increase equivalent to one percentile. The nearly parallel lines in Figure 2 reflect the similarity in these growth rates. The regression-adjusted impact estimate was not statistically significant.

When we restricted the analysis to novice teachers, the impacts of TFA were the same or larger than those reported for the comparison with all teachers. Compared with their novice counterparts, novice TFA teachers generated math test scores that were 0.26 standard deviations higher, on average. The impact on reading scores remained statistically insignificant based on the novice comparisons. We also found that impacts were similar, although slightly lower, when TFA teachers were compared with control teachers with regular teaching certificates. In general, the sample sizes for all the teacher subgroup comparisons were too small to determine whether the impacts for the subgroup comparison were significantly different from the overall impacts.

The TFA impacts were similar across different subgroups of students. For example, the impacts were similar for boys and girls and for different racial/ethnic groups. They were also similar for students with different baseline achievement scores and for those in different grades.

The conclusions regarding the positive impact of TFA teachers on math scores and no impact on reading scores were not sensitive to the assumptions underlying our estimation model. In extensive sensitivity tests, we found that the estimated test score impacts varied within a fairly narrow range. For example, estimated impacts of TFA teachers on average math scores based on alternative specifications hovered around the benchmark estimate described above, ranging from 0.13 to 0.18 standard deviation units, and were always statistically significant. We found similar stability in the estimated impacts of TFA teachers on average reading scores—all the estimates were small and not statistically significant. Finally, the impacts on both math and reading scores were reasonably similar across locations—the overall impacts were not attributable to any particular region, school, or grade.

TFA teachers had no substantial impact on the probability that students were retained in grade or assigned to summer school. The findings on student discipline, absenteeism, and behavior varied somewhat by data source. Estimates based on data from student records showed that TFA teachers had no impact on these outcomes. However, data from the teacher survey showed that the TFA teachers were more likely than the control teachers to report having had problems with student disruptions and physical conflicts among students in their classrooms. Since these measures were based on teacher reports, the differences may simply reflect differences between TFA and control teachers' expectations and perceptions regarding student behavior rather than actual differences between the classrooms.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

Our findings have important implications for a variety of stakeholders. Program funders, program operators, and policymakers at the state and federal levels have an enduring interest in finding ways to attract and retain high-quality teachers in low-income communities. District officials and school staff in such areas have an especially practical interest in the same question, particularly in the short term, with federal requirements under No Child Left Behind to place a highly qualified teacher in every classroom. Finally, parents and children in low-income communities are most directly affected by decisions about who will teach in their schools. We consider the implications of our findings for each of these groups.

From the perspective of a community or a school faced with the opportunity to hire TFA teachers, our findings suggest that TFA offers an appealing pool of candidates. First, the positive impacts on math scores suggest that by hiring TFA teachers, a school can expect to increase the average math achievement of its students (without lowering their reading achievement). Second, the consistent pattern of positive or zero impacts on test scores across grades, regions, and student subgroups suggests that there is little risk that hiring TFA teachers will reduce achievement, either for the average student or for most subgroups of students. Finally, since TFA teachers are paid the same as other teachers, the schools pay no direct costs for the achievement increase and school districts typically contribute only \$1,500 per corps member to offset recruiting costs. This contrasts with other interventions that have been shown to increase achievement, such as class size reduction, but that can entail substantial direct costs.

One could expand this reasoning to conduct a larger assessment of whether, from society's perspective, TFA is a cost-effective way to attract teachers to low-income schools. However, a full cost-effectiveness assessment would require information on a number of factors our study does not address directly. For example, although TFA teachers are paid on the same salary scale as their counterparts, they may create hidden costs if they leave their jobs sooner—for example, at the end of their two-year commitment—and have to be replaced more frequently than their non-TFA peers. Measuring such costs would be difficult, because the retention rates of TFA and non-TFA teachers are not well documented. Our data showed no difference in within-year attrition rates, but because they cover only a single school year, they cannot be used to compare attrition rates over time between our TFA and control teachers. Hanushek et al. (2004) show that teacher attrition rates are particularly high in schools that serve large numbers of academically disadvantaged students—exactly the types of schools where TFA places teachers. Therefore, there is no strong reason to presume that TFA teachers have an attrition rate higher than that of other new teachers in the same schools.

From the perspective of TFA and its funders, our findings clearly show that the organization is making progress toward its primary mission of reducing inequities in education—it supplies low-income schools with academically talented teachers who contribute to the academic achievement of their students. The success of TFA teachers is not dependent on their having extensive exposure to teacher practice or training. Even though TFA teachers generally lack any formal teacher training beyond that provided by TFA, they produce higher student test scores than the other teachers in their schools—not just other novice teachers or uncertified teachers, but also veterans and certified teachers.

Finally, our study provides important information to policymakers who are working to improve the educational opportunities for children in poor communities. The finding that many of the control teachers in our study were not certified or did not have formal pre-service training highlights the need for programs or policies that can attract good teachers to schools in the most disadvantaged communities. Our findings show that TFA is one such program.

### III. 2005 PRINCIPAL SATISFACTION SURVEY

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## Principal Satisfaction with Teach For America Teachers

Source: "A Survey of Principals in Schools with Teach For America Corps Members,"  
Kane, Parsons & Associates, Inc., June 2005

For 11 years the independent research firm of Kane, Parsons & Associates has asked principals to evaluate the performance of Teach For America teachers in their schools; the most recent survey was completed in June of 2005. As evidenced by the striking statistics that follow, principals exhibit a very high level of satisfaction with Teach For America corps members. They continue to report that Teach For America teachers are well prepared and have a significant and positive impact on their schools and on student achievement.

- **Most principals rated corps members as more effective than other faculty members, and almost none rated them as less effective.**
  - Nearly three out of four principals (74 percent) rate Teach For America corps members as above average in comparison to *other beginning teachers* with whom they've worked.
  - The majority of principals (63 percent) regarded Teach For America teachers as more effective than the *overall teaching faculty*, with respect to their impact on student achievement.
  - Principals cited corps members' hard work, dedication to teaching, strong training, and ability to learn and adapt quickly as primary reasons for high ratings.
  
- **Most principals rated corps members' training as more effective than that of other new teachers, and almost none rated it as less effective.**
  - Three out of four principals (75 percent) rated Teach For America corps members' training as *better* than that of other beginning teachers.
  - Nearly all principals (95 percent) reported that corps members' training is at least as good as the training of other beginning teachers.
  
- **The vast majority of principals rated corps members as good or excellent on eighteen indicators of effective teaching, including:**
  - Assuming responsibility for student achievement (92 percent)
  - Instructional planning (90 percent)
  - Openness to feedback and willingness to learn (90 percent)
  - Motivation and dedication to teaching (94 percent)
  - Achievement orientation and drive to succeed (94 percent)
  - Working with other faculty and administrators (93 percent)
  - Having high expectations for students (91 percent)
  - Knowledge of the subject matter (93 percent)
  - Contributing positively to the school community (91 percent)
  - Ability to think logically and critically (95 percent)

### Methodology

For the 2005 survey, Kane-Parsons surveyed 389 principals reflecting all 22 regions where Teach For America placed teachers during the 2004-2005 school year.