

BAY AREA NEWSLETTER





Dear Friends and Supporters,

AS MANY OF YOU KNOW, THIS FALL I RETURNED TO THE ROLE OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF TEACH FOR AMERICA • BAY AREA AS PART OF A LARGER REORGANIZATION AIMED AT BUILDING STRONGER LOCAL MOVEMENTS AND INSPIRING INNOVATION AND ADAPTATION OF OUR APPROACH. I AM SO EXCITED ABOUT THIS ORGANIZATIONAL EVOLUTION AT TEACH FOR AMERICA AND FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEAD THIS CHANGE FROM HERE IN THE BAY AREA. AS A WORLD-RENOWNED HUB FOR INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY, WE HAVE A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO HARNESS OUR UNPARALLELED PEOPLE, FINANCIAL, AND TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES TO RADICALLY CHANGE HOW WE APPROACH PREPARING AND SUPPORTING TEACHERS AND DEVELOPING THEIR ONGOING LEADERSHIP AS PRINCIPALS, SCHOOL SYSTEM LEADERS, POLICY MAKERS, AND MORE. IF THERE IS ONE COMMUNITY POSITIONED TO REIMAGINE PUBLIC EDUCATION AND DEVELOP THE SCHOOLS OUR CHILDREN NEED TO THRIVE IN THE DIVERSE, GLOBAL WORLD OF TODAY AND THE FUTURE, IT IS THE BAY AREA. AND WE BELIEVE TEACH FOR AMERICA HAS A UNIQUE ROLE TO PLAY IN THIS EFFORT.

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With the start of the new school year, we in the Bay Area are focused on two essential questions:

1) How do we create a force of path-changing educators who create lasting and meaningful change in the lives of the children and their families?

As demonstrated by the recent Mathematica study, our corps members—even in their first and second years—are some of the most effective teachers in the nation. **However, we know it is possible to be more than just effective—to have a truly path-changing impact on a child's life in one year and disrupt the trajectory that demography dictates.** When the average impact of our people is at this level, tens of thousands of children in our most impoverished communities will more permanently be on a trajectory toward expanded life opportunities. This goal requires that we rethink our training and support and prepare our teachers to leverage technology, parents, and others in the community in more meaningful ways. Moreover, the experience and relationships gained in doing this work will create a force of education activists with an unshakeable conviction about the potential of our classrooms and schools to be radically different places and real insight into how to lead that change.

2) How do we harness and foster the collective leadership potential of our now sizeable and continually growing network of leaders?

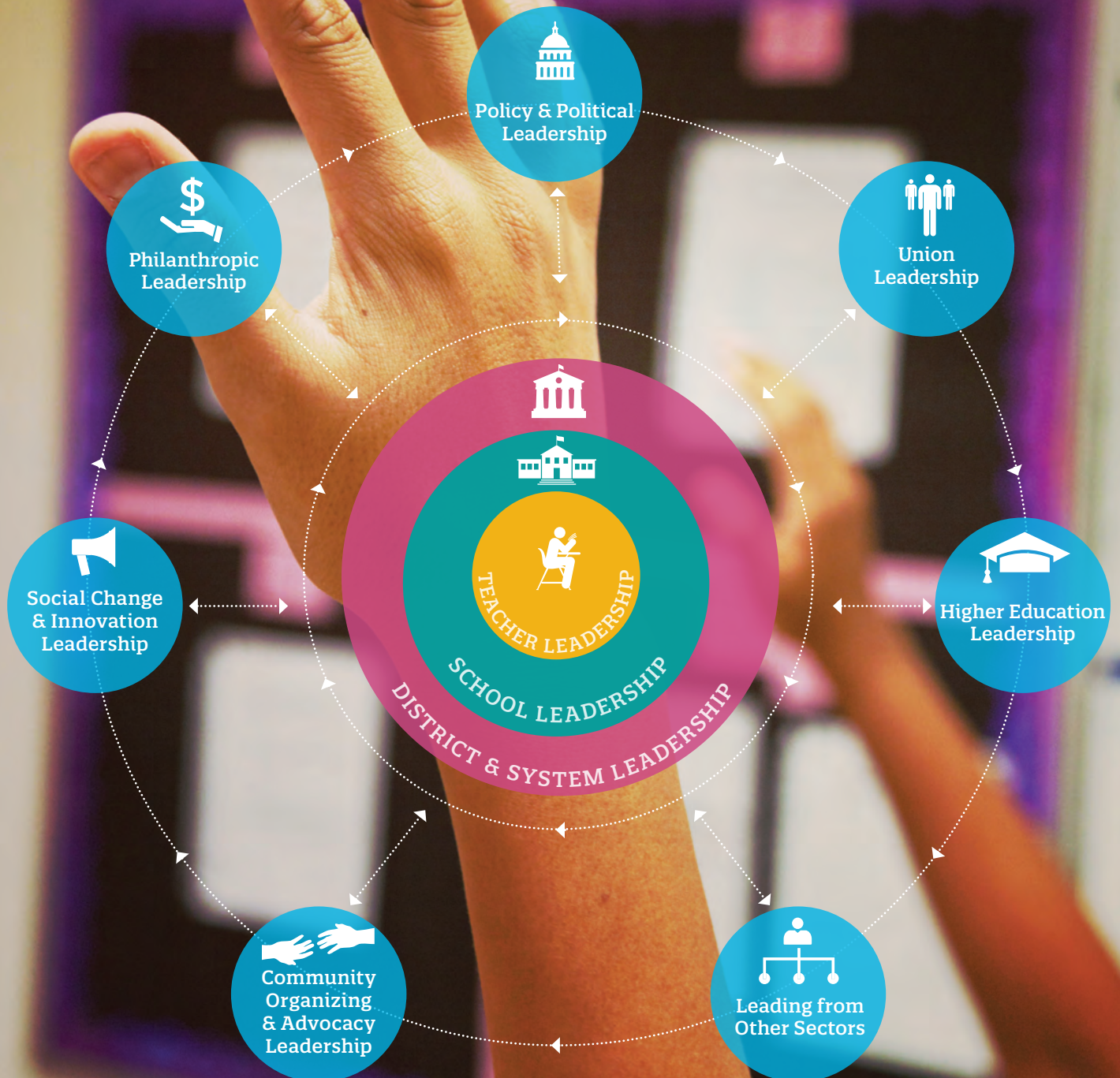
As in all other sectors, leadership in education is fundamental. In classrooms, schools, systems, and communities—where there is transformational change, there is a transformational leader. Our greatest contribution to the effort to radically rethink schools is developing this leadership force. To do this we must support individual leaders in our community to fully exercise their individual leadership potential. The classrooms our corps member and alumni teachers lead must be path-changing and helping to redefine what learning can look like. Our alumni must start and lead remarkably successful schools and assume roles in districts and charter organizations that help create the conditions for innovation to thrive. They must continue to reach beyond their classrooms and schools to build community organizations, run for office, and to start new social enterprises. We must continue to help each individual in our effort maximize his or her leadership potential in these efforts.

At the same time, our corps members and alumni must work together and build coalitions needed to effect and sustain systemic change in schools, our systems, and community-wide. We must do more to harness and foster the collective leadership of our network as a positive, disruptive force for change in our community and nationwide. Underpinning all of our efforts is a renewed focus on the role of innovation and technology. The disruption of the education sector has begun and, in many ways, our community is at the forefront of that effort. However, public sector change will not truly take hold until there is a grassroots force working from within to inform and develop innovations and help guide the adaptation of new ideas, approaches, and technologies.

Answering these questions is the focus of our work over the next three years and it will demand we evolve much of our approach. Over the course of the 2013-2014 school year we will leverage the entrepreneurial and creative minds in our community and beyond, and will examine other sectors to help us to think differently about training and developing leaders. We need to provide the training and support our corps members and alumni need to become drivers of innovation and first-adopters of new educational approaches that promise to yield dramatically different results for kids. We will continue to ask what more we can do to accelerate the individual leadership potential of each person in our network, while also exploring ways to foster the collective leadership of our now robust network of school and system-level leaders. And we will create new platforms and tools—or adapt existing technologies— to better connect our people to one another, to resources, and to opportunities.



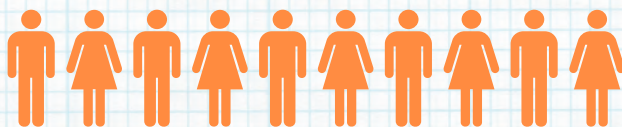
Creating truly transformational change at the community level will require an ecosystem of leaders in key sectors working collectively to disrupt the status quo. Our contribution has been and will continue to be to generate a diverse, driven, and talented force of leaders in each part of that ecosystem. What follows is a brief overview of the progress, challenges, and aspirations we have for the leadership force we have built and are working to grow with your support.



OUR 2013 FIRST-YEAR CORPS

205

First-Year
Corps Members



3.44

Average
Undergraduate GPA

31%



First in Family to Attend College

5

Taught by a
Corps Member

105



Attended University in California

101



Hail from California

57%

People of Color

11%

African American

17%

Hispanic

21%

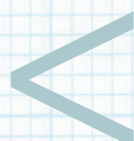


Majored or minored in
STEM (Science, Technology,
Engineering and Math)

OUR ALUMNI NETWORK

2,007

Total Bay Area Alums



44%

were Corps Members
in the Bay Area

54%

were Corps Members
in another region

Approximately

30%

of Regional Alums
Still Teach



Approximately

2/3

of Regional Alums
Still Work in Education

138

School & System
Leaders

Teacher Leadership

Thanks to the continued strong support from our community, we again welcomed over 200 first-year corps members to the Bay Area. More than half of our incoming corps of teachers identifies as people of color and a third were the first in their families to graduate from college, making this our most diverse cohort to date.

Teaching remains the most common profession among our alumni, with one-third of our 2,000 Bay Area alumni teaching in pre-K through 12 classrooms across the Bay Area. Together with our 400 first and second year corps members **there are now over 1,000 Teach For America teachers working in more than 150 of our highest poverty schools reaching more than 70,000 of our most promising, yet underserved students each day.**



Our teachers are more likely than the average California educator to share the backgrounds of their students, more likely to have a STEM background, and on average are producing the highest gains in student achievement regardless of experience. Incredible teachers like **Olaniyi Solebo ('12)** show us that it is possible to give children an education that is life changing, even in one year. And more and more, we are seeing our corps member and alumni teachers come together with their colleagues to influence school-wide change. At Everett Middle School in San Francisco's Mission District **more than 40% of the faculty are now Teach For America corps members or alumni**. These teacher leaders have come together with the administration to set ambitious, school-wide academic goals, develop aligned, rigorous and engaging curriculum, and build professional learning communities centered on continuous improvement and learning among the teaching staff. Everett is the fastest improving school in the district, gaining 54 points on California's Academic Performance Index and increasing math proficiency at three times the rate of other district schools. Recently, US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan heralded Everett as a potential model for successful school transformation.

While we are thrilled to see the impact of our ever-expanding cadres of teacher leaders, these examples show us that still more impact is possible – we aspire for the average corps member to reach beyond significant academic gains to realize path-changing impact by just their second year teaching and we aspire to do more to support the collective leadership of our teachers in driving school-wide change. We will spend the next year thoroughly assessing our entire approach to our teacher training and ongoing support: examining whether we should localize our training institute; rethinking coaching and collaboration structures for both corps members and alumni (and the role of alumni teachers in that); building stronger regional collaboration and learning platforms; and exploring the role of technology as accelerator.



KEY PRIORITIES: DEEPER LEARNING, STEM & COMMON CORE

How do you best prepare students for success in a global economy that demands critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and innovation?

With support from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Teach For America • Bay Area has been exploring this question in depth and identifying the critical skill sets and teaching approaches that will enable kids, especially those from low-income and minority communities, to succeed in a globally competitive world. For the past two years, we've laid the groundwork for a new, research-based approach to teacher preparation and support centered on helping students develop 21st century skills such as collaboration, public speaking, critical thinking and problem solving, and capitalizes on the forthcoming shift to national Common Core standards. The next phase in this work is to integrate what we've learned into our upcoming program redesign, while using pilots this year to continue to refine our understanding of what it takes to prepare teachers for this shift to Common Core.

STEM drives our economy yet our schools struggle to attract teachers with strong STEM backgrounds. The result is that many students growing up in low-income communities do not have access to teachers with the backgrounds and experiences that enable them to excel in STEM subjects. **Teach For America is building one of the largest, most diverse, and most effective STEM educator pipelines in California. Over 23 percent of our corps members majored or minored in STEM fields and nearly one-third teach STEM subjects.** In the next three years, we will recruit, train, place, and support more than 300 talented math and science teachers who will instill nearly 30,000 students with the skills, knowledge, and passion necessary to excel at STEM. The most recent study on our teachers' impact found that having a corps member as a math teacher had the equivalent impact of an additional 2.6 months of learning in math over the course of a year, when compared to both novice and veteran teachers from traditional or less selective alternative certification programs.

School & System Leadership

Transformational schools radically alter the paths of students facing poverty, defy that demography is destiny, and act as powerful proof points of what is possible. Across the Bay Area, 138 Teach For America alumni are leading schools and school systems that broaden opportunity and fuel demand for improved educational options (55 principals, 76 assistant principals, and ten systems leaders).

Inspired by the pioneering educators who came before her, Teach For America alumna, **Judy Tang ('06)** is boldly leading one such school in East San Jose. One hundred percent of KIPP Heartwood Academy's students qualify for free or reduced price meals, 20 percent are English language learners, and 82 percent are Latino or African American. Where no traditional middle school in East San Jose's Alum Rock Union School District scored at or above the state's Academic Performance Index goal of 800, KIPP Heartwood Academy's scores of 922 placed it in the top 8% of schools across California. KIPP is a transformational school – providing an education that helps children change the trajectory that demographics would predict. Jordan Middle School in nearby Palo Alto achieved a similar API score of 932, yet its low-income students scored 692, well below the statewide average of 737. We see in this example that: 1) It is possible to create a school that helps students overcome the challenges of poverty and excel at the highest levels, and 2) accomplishing this is the result of having a different orientation and mission than schools that are typically regarded as excellent.

In the years ahead, we will continue our emphasis on growing the number of leaders like Judy who have the potential and drive to establish and lead transformational schools. We have a renewed focus on the role that we can play to help ready our people for this level of leadership and will be more deliberate in building partnerships that prepare our alumni to become school leaders. One exciting new approach that resulted from these reflections is our first-ever San Francisco Transformational School Fellowship, enabled by the support of the Severns Family Foundation. We selected an inaugural group of 14 alumni teachers in San Francisco who we believe have the credibility and capacity to lead school-wide change. Over the course of this year, this fellowship will provide them with additional targeted skill building and a close peer network so that they are prepared to lead their colleagues in the effort to effect change broadly. This fellowship will allow us to work with our alumni to build a common understanding of what a transformational school looks like and in the process help to further develop the pipeline for transformational school leaders.

ALUMNI LEADERSHIP

- **63%** of KIPP principals are Teach For America alums (five total)
- **75%** of Rocketship principals are Teach For America alums (six total)
- **14%** of Oakland Unified School District principals are TFA alums (12 total)
- Notable education-focused organizations led by Teach For America alums include: Breakthrough, Camp Phoenix, College Track, Edthena, Great Oakland Public Schools, Summer Search, Tutor Corps, and Vida Verde



District and school system leaders shape the context in which school leaders operate and can be catalytic in creating the environment needed to foster the growth of transformational schools. Alumni are already playing this role across the systems we partner with in the Bay Area. Currently, ten alumni work in senior levels within our school systems. They are deputy superintendents, senior cabinet level members, and charter networks leaders. For example, **Monica Vasquez (Los Angeles '94)**, after leading ground-breaking human capital work with The New Teacher Project, now serves as Chief Administrative Officer of Human Resources at San Francisco Unified School District. **Monica Thomas (Los Angeles '99)**, who led one of the most successful school turnarounds in Oakland, now sits on the School Region and Network Leaders team at the district level as a director of instruction where she advises a cluster of the district's elementary school principals on continuous school improvement efforts. As more alumni like these rise to positions of influence and leadership at the system-level, they are positioned to help create the conditions that allow transformational schools to develop and flourish across communities.



Community Leadership & Advocacy

Along with key leaders effecting transformational change at the classroom, school, and system levels, meaningful and sustained change at the aggregate level also requires a force of leaders informing and empowering parents and the community. Given the importance of this part of the ecosystem, we are continually asking ourselves how we can work directly with other community and advocacy organizations, as well as how we can tap our growing alumni network to help accelerate the efforts of these organizations.

Amongst our current alumni, we are already seeing promising examples of this happening. **Jonathan Klein (Los Angeles '97)** co-founded Greater Oakland (GO) Public Schools—a coalition of families, educators, and community leaders working to expand high-quality education in Oakland. GO's efforts have resulted in innovative partnerships that reimagine the relationship between schools and districts to benefit both students and the community at-large. One example of these partnerships was its participation in the "All Kids" campaign, where GO worked with organizations such as the Urban Strategies Council, Oakland Community Organizations, 100 Black Men of the Bay Area, East Bay Asian Youth Center, Youth Uprising, and the Prescott Joseph Center in order to accelerate students' success by enabling greater school-level decision-making. As a result of this campaign, schools in Oakland were given increased autonomy over key staffing, budget, curriculum, and schedule decisions. **Natasha Hoehn (New York City '96)**, senior partner at California Education Partners, was critical in building a coalition of eight major school districts who recently received waivers from the No Child Left Behind law. The decision—the first of its kind nationally—allowed the major urban school districts in California to move forward with innovative, data-driven teacher evaluation and professional development plans while the federal and state entities remain in gridlock over the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind.





Conclusion

The past 23 years have unequivocally shown that our corps members become leaders in all areas of the ecosystem: teacher leaders, principals, system leaders, and policy makers charged with helping our public schools live up to our aspirations and values. In just two decades, our alumni have pioneered the high-performing KIPP and Rocketship charter networks and they have reshaped how our country and school districts approach teacher recruitment, selection, and retention through the work of The New Teacher Project. Additionally, they are devising new frameworks for our systems through organizations like New Schools for New Orleans and as system leaders like John White and Kevin Huffman, state superintendents of education in Louisiana and Tennessee, respectively, the most innovative and fastest-improving systems in our nation.

This next evolution of our approach here in the Bay Area promises to create a new generation of educational and social entrepreneurs and leaders: Leaders who are deeply grounded in rigorous learning; equipped to adapt, build, and integrate technology in catalytic ways; and, capable of cultivating the social, emotional, and character skills in both students and themselves to excel in our rapidly changing world. These leaders will be more connected to each other and to innovations in the field than ever before. Through their new levels of success, they will also be more convicted about the changes that must happen to transform our public schools and more equipped to lead that change.

Thank you for your support in helping us build the leadership force that brought us to this critical point—proving that it is possible to provide a path-changing education to children facing the challenges of poverty and that doing so is a key part of addressing inequality in our country. We are incredibly grateful for your ongoing support in this effort and for your partnership as we take what we believe will be a significant step towards ensuring all children here in the Bay Area receive an education that empowers them to contribute their full potential to our community. We look forward to the year ahead and to reporting back on what we learn and progress made.

Thank You

To our nearly 1,000 corporate, foundation and individual supporters.

To our regional board for their continued commitment to our work.



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