

Colorado Department of Education Quality Teacher Recruitment Grant Program Year 1 Final Report

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Executive Summary

Section 22-94-101, C.R.S (Senate Bill 13-260), created the Quality Teacher Recruitment Grant Program, which authorizes the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) to fund teacher preparation programs to recruit, prepare, and place high-quality teachers in school districts that have had historic difficulty recruiting and retaining quality teachers.

In December, 2013, through a competitive selection process, CDE awarded grant funds to the Public Education & Business Coalition (PEBC) and Teach For America (TFA)-Colorado, to place 65 and 95 teachers, respectively, in 17 Colorado school districts by fall 2014-15. In addition, CDE selected OMNI Institute to conduct a formative and summative evaluation of the program. This document summarizes findings from Year 1 interviews with program leaders and staff, and district and higher education partners. Summative findings will be provided at the end of Year 2.

Program Approach

PEBC and TFA each seek to recruit, prepare, and place highly qualified teachers in high-need districts to promote effective teaching and increase student achievement. Each program implements a unique model to achieve these goals.

PEBC	TFA
Initiative to improve effectiveness of school systems by increasing teacher quality and retention district-wide, supporting ongoing development of residents and mentor teachers, and enhancing capacity and collaborative leadership in partner schools and districts	Founded to reduce educational inequities by placing high-quality candidates in high-need/hard-to-serve schools and by creating alumni to serve as advocates and leaders for change in educational policy and ideology
Colorado Only	Colorado is one of 48 TFA regions
Candidates agree to a 5-year commitment	Corps members agree to a 2-year commitment
Program admission is generally contingent on successful placement (i.e., matched to a mentor teacher or a principal request to fill an open position in a rural district)	Corps members are admitted to the program, assigned to Colorado, and then apply for open teaching positions in partner districts
In the first year, most candidates serve as residents in the classrooms of mentor teachers; about 15% serve as teachers of record in rural districts (based on current placement data)	In the first year, all corps members are placed as teachers of record
Institute of Higher Education Partner: Adams State University, located in the San Luis Valley	Institute of Higher Education Partner: University of Colorado-Denver’s ASPIRE to Teach Program
Grant goal: place 65 teachers in 14 partner districts	Grant goal: place 95 teachers in 3 partner districts

Program Strengths

Although each program implements a unique approach, they share several strengths.

A collaborative and responsive approach to district partnerships. District partners had high praise for both programs. PEBC and TFA-Colorado acknowledge the importance of being flexible and adaptive to meet district needs. Programs and district partners indicated that partnerships are successful when there is open, clear, and consistent communication; program responsiveness to unique district contexts; shared agreement on program vision and approach; and strong evidence of program effectiveness.

Implementation of a highly rigorous selection process. Each program uses multiple measures to assess candidates, including an initial application, résumés and transcripts, essays and written assessments, and individual and group interviews. Each also emphasizes selection of candidates who possess core characteristics of successful educators (e.g., coachable, reflective, and self-aware; a culturally-sensitive mindset; inherent belief that all children can learn and achieve; possession of relational skills needed to teach; a history of high achievement; persistence, self-efficacy, and the ability to overcome challenges).

Integration of theory and practice to effectively prepare teachers. The integration of theory and practice is a foundational element of PEBC's program, enhanced in recent years through its partnership with Adams State University. TFA also is strengthening this element of the program through its recent partnership with the University of Colorado – Denver's ASPIRE program. Both models employ summer institutes, coursework, observations of candidates in the field, timely feedback, and ongoing professional development.

Year 1 Challenges

Both programs expressed challenges unique to implementing in high-need and rural districts. Programs mentioned that high turnover in district and school leadership creates difficulties because of the considerable work involved in building relationships, program support, and district capacity. In addition, in rural areas, TFA-Colorado indicated that it must identify the best method to provide leadership, support and resources over dispersed areas. Although rural districts have a demonstrated need, they also have a lower number of students and open positions, which makes it challenging for TFA to place clusters of corps members, its preferred placement approach. PEBC also indicated that expansion into rural communities is requiring adjustments to its model, and how it provides support to candidates placed as year 1 teachers of record, as mentor teachers are teaching in different classrooms. Both programs are exploring opportunities to enhance program implementation in rural districts.

Increasing the diversity of program candidates and recruiting STEM candidates are ongoing challenges for both programs as well as their district partners. PEBC noted that it is especially difficult in rural communities, and is working to form stronger rural partnerships and is exploring recruitment from rural communities outside of Colorado. Among other efforts, the TFA recruitment team has expanded its partnerships to include more Colorado colleges and universities with diverse student bodies and TFA-Colorado supports the Regional Diversity Initiative to bolster recruitment of diverse corps members.

Next Steps

In October, 2014, vendors will provide OMNI with final placement data. At the end of the 2014-15 academic year, after candidates have been teaching for one year, vendors are slated to provide OMNI with educator effectiveness data. OMNI also will survey placed teachers and conduct a second phase of key informant interviews. The final Year 2 report will include data on program success in placing highly qualified teachers, as well as lessons learned over the two-year grant program.

Quality Teacher Recruitment Grant Program: Year 1 Findings

The inequitable distribution of highly qualified and effective teachers has been cited as possibly “...the most vexing public school problem facing America’s policymakers today” (National Strategy Forum, n.d.). To address disparities in students’ access to effective teachers, the State of Colorado enacted legislation to authorize the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) to fund educator preparation providers in Colorado to recruit, prepare, and place highly qualified teachers in school districts with high need that have traditionally had difficulty attracting high-quality teachers (Colorado Department of Education [CDE], n.d., Quality Teacher Recruitment Grant Program).

Through a competitive grant application process, CDE and a group of external reviewers selected the Public Education & Business Coalition (PEBC) and Teach For America (TFA) – Colorado to receive funding to meet legislative objectives. Grant recipients were required to provide 100% matching funds and place teachers in partner districts for the 2014-15 school year. The same legislation that provided funding for the teacher preparation program also allowed for a third party evaluator to track program outcomes. OMNI Institute (OMNI), a non-profit research and evaluation firm located in Denver, was selected to conduct the evaluation.

OMNI researchers, in collaboration with CDE staff, developed an evaluation plan that aims to 1) fulfill legislative reporting requirements (CRS 22-94-103); 2) examine the effectiveness of the program to recruit, select, train, and retain highly qualified teachers; and 3) provide CDE with detailed information on program implementation that can be used to improve program administration. The evaluation plan includes both summative and formative evaluation components.

In the first year of the grant (November 25, 2013 – June 30, 2014), OMNI coordinated with CDE to identify the final evaluation questions, established data sharing agreements with selected programs, and began gathering data from each of the programs regarding the teacher recruitment, preparation, and placement process. As part of the evaluation, OMNI conducted in-depth interviews with key informants and gathered teacher recruitment and placement data for both programs for the 2014-15 school year. In the second year of the grant (July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015), OMNI will gather final teacher recruitment and placement data, conduct a second phase of key informant interviews, survey placed teachers, and gather data on educator effectiveness for placed teachers, as available. At the end of the second year of funding, OMNI will submit a final report summarizing results from both the formative and summative evaluations for the two-year grant.

This report provides information on the number and characteristics of candidates recruited and placed as of August 2014, and a summary of results from the first set of key informant interviews.

The report is organized into the following sections:

- Section 1: Teacher Recruitment and Placement as of August, 2014
- Section 2: Overview of Programs, Partnership Strategies, Successes, and Challenges by Program

When relevant, OMNI used information from other materials, such as the TFA and PEBC program websites, to help contextualize findings (<http://www.teachforamerica.org> and <http://www.pebc.org/>).

SECTION 1: TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND PLACEMENT AS OF AUGUST, 2014

As part of evaluation requirements of the Quality Teacher Recruitment Grant, TFA-Colorado and PEBC provided OMNI with teacher recruitment and placement data as of August, 2014. Vendors will submit final placement data after October 15, 2014. As a result, current placement data are preliminary and may not reflect the final number and percentage of teachers placed by each vendor.

Table 1 provides information on the number of teachers who were targeted, recruited, and placed as of August, 2014. In addition, the table provides information on the number of placed teachers who will serve as teachers of record and as residents in 2014-15. Finally, Table 1 provides information on the number of recruited candidates who will not be placed (e.g., candidates who withdrew or did not successfully complete the program) and the number of recruited candidates who are awaiting placement. As of August, 2014, vendors reported recruiting 130 teachers and placing 97 in partner districts. TFA-Colorado has placed 42 teachers and PEBC has placed 55. Of the 55 teachers placed by PEBC, eight are placed as teachers of record and 47 are placed as residents.

Table 1: Number of Targeted, Recruited and Placed Teachers, Overall and by Program¹

	TFA-Coloardo	PEBC	Total
Target Number	95	65	160
Recruited	71	59	130
Placed (as of August 2014)	42	55	97
<i>Placed as Teachers of Record</i>	42	8	50
<i>Placed as Residents</i>	NA	47	47
Will Not Be Placed	4	3	7
Awaiting Placement	25	1	26

¹ Final placement data became available after this report was submitted to the Colorado Department of Education and have been included in Appendix B.

Based on these preliminary data as of August, 2014, TFA-Colorado has placed 44.2% of its targeted number of teachers and PEBC has placed 84.6% of its targeted number of teachers, for an overall program placement rate of 60.6% (97 of the 160 target). TFA-Colorado has 25 recruited teachers who have yet to be placed and PEBC has one teacher who has yet to be placed. Once final placement data are submitted in October, OMNI will report the total number of teachers placed in relation to each vendor's goal.

At this stage, differences in placement rates may be due, in part, to differences in TFA-Colorado and PEBC's admission and placement processes. Specifically, once corps members are admitted into TFA, and assigned to the Colorado region, TFA-Colorado works with corps members and partner districts to identify appropriate open positions. Corps members must then apply for a teaching position in a district through the district's hiring process. In contrast, the admission and placement process are more closely tied in PEBC's program. That is, admission into the PEBC program as a teacher of record is contingent upon an agreement with the district to place the individual candidate. Residents may be provisionally admitted, but must ultimately be matched with a mentor teacher for placement.²

TEACHER DEMOGRAPHICS

Both PEBC and TFA-Colorado strive to recruit diverse candidates into their programs. Tables 2 and 3, found on page six, describe the available demographic characteristics of teachers placed to date, by vendor and overall. In brief, 42.7% of placed teachers to date are male and 32.3% are non-White. The vast majority have a Bachelor's Degree and the average age is in the mid-to-late twenties.

² For more information on how each vendor places teachers, please review the Placement section in PEBC and TFA's program descriptions below.

Table 2: Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Education Level of Teachers Placed, by Program and Overall

	TFA-Coloardo		PEBC		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Gender						
Female	27	64.3%	28	51.9%	55	57.3%
Male	15	35.7%	26	48.1%	41	42.7%
Total	42	100%	54	100%	97	100%
Ethnicity/Race						
African America	1	2.4%	2	3.7%	3	3.1%
Asian	1	2.4%	0	0.0%	1	1.0%
Hispanic or Latino	9	21.4%	8	14.8%	17	17.7%
Native American	0	0.0%	1	1.9%	1	1.0%
White	24	57.1%	41	75.9%	65	67.7%
Other	2	4.8%	0	0.0%	2	2.1%
More than one race	5	11.9%	2	3.7%	7	7.3%
Total	42	100%	54	100%	97	100%
Education						
Bachelor's Degree	35	83.3%	50	92.6%	85	88.5%
Masters Degree	5	11.9%	4	7.4%	9	9.4%
Professional School Degree	2	4.8%	0	0.0%	2	2.1%
Total	42	100%	54	100%	96	100%

*Note: there was some missing data on demographic characteristics of placed teachers. Percentages are based on the valid N.

Table 3: Age of Teachers at Placement, by Program and Overall

	TFA-Colorado (n=41)	PEBC (n=61)
Minimum	21	21
Maximum	63	56
Mean	26	28
Median	24	26
Standard Deviation	8.21	7.86

*Note: there was some missing data on demographic characteristics of placed teachers.

DISTRICT PLACEMENTS

Tables 4 and 5 provide information on the number of teachers targeted and placed to date, by district, for PEBC and TFA-Colorado, respectively. To date, PEBC has placed at least one candidate in all but two of the 14 districts they committed to partnering with through the grant.

TFA-Colorado committed to working with three districts through the grant, and has placed corps members in each of the three districts for the 2014-15 school year.

Table 4: Number of Teachers Placed in PEBC Partner Districts

District	# targeted	# placed to date	% of target placed to date
Adams 12 Five Star Schools	10	9	90%
Alamosa	4	7	175%
Aurora Public Schools	11	9	82%
Brighton School District	*	7	*
Center	4	1	25%
Crowley	2	0	0%
Durango	5	1	20%
East Otero	2	2	100%
Huerfano	2	0	0%
Ignacio	2	2	100%
Jefferson County	14	5	36%
Monte Vista	3	4	133%
Montezuma-Cortez	2	1	50%
North Conejos	4	7	175%
Total	65*	55	85%

*Note: PEBC committed to placing 65 teachers total for the grant. PEBC received permission to add Brighton School District to the list of district partners after the initial grants were awarded. The number of teachers placed in Brighton is to be reallocated from other Metro Denver school districts.

Table 5: Number of Teachers Placed in TFA Partner Districts

District	# targeted	# placed to date	% of target placed to date
Denver Public Schools	50	23	46%
Harrison School District 2	25	10	40%
Pueblo City Schools	20	9	45%
Total	95	42	44%

Once updated placement data are provided in October, OMNI will report final numbers of teachers placed by school, district, grade level, and subject area. In addition, OMNI will report on the number of students reached through final placements. Furthermore, once final placement data are obtained, OMNI will provide information on the number and percent of teachers who are teaching in areas and grade levels for which they meet the Highly Qualified requirements. Finally, once the academic year has been completed, OMNI also will report on educator effectiveness data on placed teachers to the extent that these data are provided by vendors to OMNI.

SECTION 2: OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS, PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIES, SUCCESSES, AND CHALLENGES

METHODS

Three OMNI researchers conducted interviews with 14 key informants across the two teacher preparation programs (TFA=8 interviews; PEBC=6 interviews). Program staff, and CDE, in one instance, identified the key informants who were knowledgeable about the program’s recruitment, preparation, and placement practices. Key informants included program leadership, partners supporting candidate recruitment in the field, district partners, and higher education partners.

Key informants included:

PEBC³

- Ulcca Joshi Hansen, Vice President, Public Education & Business Coalition
- Belle Faust, Executive Director, Colorado Boettcher Teacher Residency
- Carrie Lavalley, Recruitment Manager, Colorado Boettcher Teacher Residency
- Ruth DeCrescentis, Chief Human Resources Officer, Brighton School District 27J
- Laura Galido, Executive Director of Human Resources, Durango School District 9-R
- Stephanie Hensley, Field Director, Teacher Education Department, Adams State University

TFA

- Sean VanBerschot, Executive Director, Teach For America–Colorado
- Amanda Skrzypchak, Director of Matriculation and Placement, Teach For America–Colorado
- Kristy Martin, Recruitment Manager, Teach For America–National
- David Omenn, Vice President of Recruitment, Teach For America–National
- Laney Shaler, Partner of Strategic Staffing and Program Management, Denver Public Schools
- Pamela Aragon, Director of Human Capital, Harrison School District 2
- Mark McPherson, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Pueblo City Schools
- Suzanne Arnold, Director of ASPIRE to Teach Alternative Licensure Program, University of Colorado–Denver

Key informants were initially contacted by e-mail and phone to schedule interviews. Once an appointment was set, key informants were e-mailed a reminder of the interview one to three days before their scheduled interview. This reminder included a brief interview guide with a short description of the evaluation, informed consent information, and the primary interview questions (Appendix A). Key informants also were notified that OMNI, per contractual obligations, provides a copy of all recordings and interview notes to CDE.

³ Ulcca Joshi Hansen and Carrie Lavalley left their respective positions with the Public Education & Business Coalition after their interviews were completed.

OMNI developed an interview guide based on the goals of the grant as specified in the legislation and in discussions with CDE. Interview topics included a program overview, district partnerships, teacher recruitment, teacher preparation, and teacher placement. OMNI tailored interview questions based on key informants' roles and responsibilities; key informants were asked only questions that were relevant to their roles. CDE program staff reviewed and approved the guide.

Interviews were conducted between April 9 and July 18, 2014, and lasted between 21 and 91 minutes. The average interview time was 53 minutes. Across the two programs, seven program staff, five district partners, and two higher education partners were interviewed. The shortest interviews were with district partners, while the longest were with program leaders, such as the Executive Director or Vice President of the organization. Thirteen of the interviews were conducted by phone and were audio recorded. One key informant requested to participate in an in-person interview, in the presence of another staff member, and to exclude audio-recording. This interview took place at the key informant's office and another OMNI staff member attended with the facilitator to serve in a note-taking role.

Prior to analysis, a coding structure was developed based on the interview guides. Two OMNI staff members reviewed interview audio recordings and notes and analyzed data using the coding structure to identify themes in each of the question areas. In instances of incomplete information, an OMNI staff member conducted follow-up conversations with key program staff to clarify questions and obtain additional information about key topics.

PUBLIC EDUCATION & BUSINESS COALITION

The Colorado Boettcher Teacher Residency, an initiative of the Public Education and Business Coalition, is an alternative-licensure program that partners with high-need school districts to increase teacher quality and retention district-wide, to support the ongoing development of residents and mentor teachers in the program, to enhance capacity and collaborative leadership in partner districts and schools, and to increase student achievement. Core philosophies of the program are the integration of theory and practice, job-embedded coaching, ongoing training and support, and a model of quality improvement that moves beyond individual teachers to improve the effectiveness of entire school systems.

Program participants agree to a five-year commitment in which they will earn an alternative teaching license, a Masters of Education degree, and an endorsement in culturally and linguistically diverse education through the Colorado Department of Education. The program primarily employs a residency model, in which participants spend a year assisting a mentor teacher in a classroom before becoming a teacher of record in their own classroom. During this first year, participants are referred to as residents. Residents working in a classroom with a mentor teacher may be placed in either urban or rural school districts. To be responsive to schools in rural districts with immediate needs for teachers of record, PEBC will implement a model referred to by the program as alternative induction. In this model, candidates immediately become

teachers of record and lead teach in the classroom full-time, while completing their professional development and Masters coursework during evenings and weekends. The program hopes to match candidates placed through the alternative induction model to a mentor teacher, but the nature and intensity of the mentoring relationship is more limited than the mentoring relationships established for candidates placed as residents in mentor teacher classrooms. PEBC developed the alternative induction model to meet the needs of some rural districts, and it is not used in urban districts.

Figure 1 provides a brief visual overview of the process by which PEBC candidates are recruited, trained, and placed. Detailed information on partnerships, recruitment, selection, preparation, and placement is provided in the sections below.

Figure 1: PEBC Visual Overview

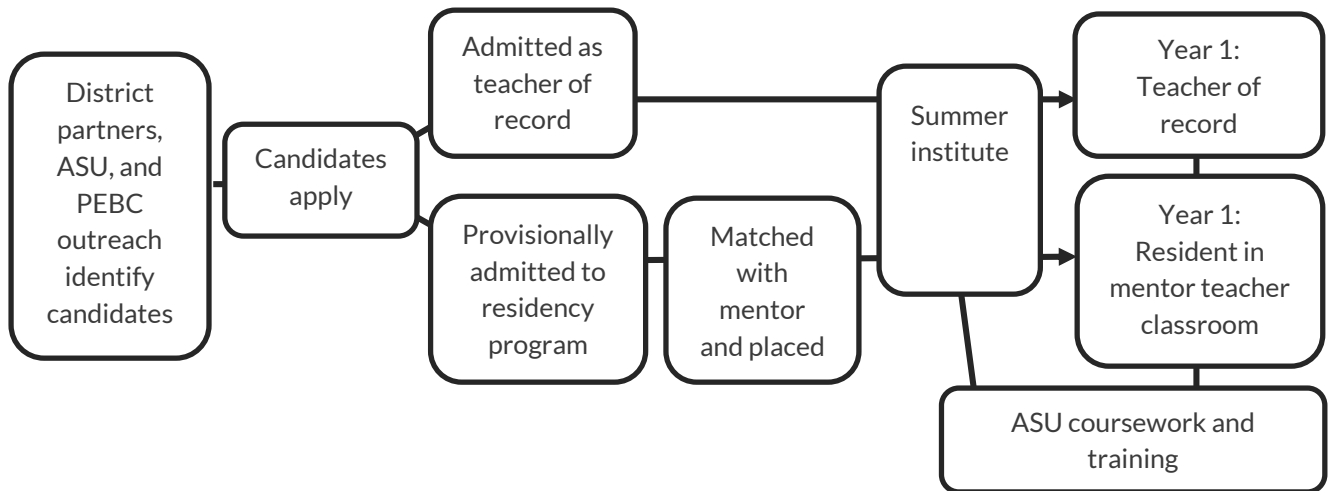


Figure Note: Adams State University (ASU) is PEBC’s Institute of Higher Education partner for all candidates placed through the program. Occasionally candidates admitted to the program as residents, upon district request, are switched to serve as teachers of record.

DISTRICT PARTNERS

PEBC used several criteria to select partner districts for the Quality Teacher Recruitment Grant. First, PEBC sought to leverage existing relationships from efforts that began about two and a half years ago, when PEBC, through funding from the Boettcher Foundation, established a relationship with Adams State University and began expanding its program into the San Luis Valley. In addition, using what PEBC has learned from its work in the San Luis Valley, the Quality Teacher Recruitment Grant also allowed PEBC to expand beyond this region and to partner with additional rural districts that they were not able to reach previously. Finally, in general, PEBC considers several factors when choosing to partner with districts, including:

- Whether the district indicates a need for more or higher quality teachers;
- The district’s flexibility and willingness to work with PEBC in a two-way partnership;

- Whether PEBC has existing relationships and connections with the district;
- Whether there is leadership in the district willing to champion the program; and
- The availability of school principals that meet the criteria for a successful Boettcher Training Site Leader.

The ways in which PEBC partners with districts vary depending on the individual district's situational and contextual needs. For example, PEBC will adjust the amount of direct economic support provided to a district depending upon the amount of available resources in the district (e.g., providing stipends for resident teachers). Furthermore, PEBC will increase its support and adjust its implementation plan for districts that require longer preparation timeframes and more intensive capacity building and professional development prior to and during program implementation. PEBC staff noted that this is often the case in rural communities. Some districts may not initially have the structures and capacity needed for the program, but PEBC's goal is to create system-wide change and to work with districts to help build structure and capacity. In these situations, PEBC spends time doing 'Year Zero' work before placing candidates.

[Partnership strategies] are very tailored and context driven, because if we don't get it right, it will take longer, and be less successful in the long run. So the strategy is more in the give and take, and really taking the time to build the relationship, and to discuss the needs...This can be a challenge because you want to move fast and we don't have a lot of time, but it takes time and it will be better in the long run. –Belle Faust, Executive Director, Colorado Boettcher Teacher Residency

Year Zero work involves:

- Working with district and school leaders to increase leadership capacity;
- Identifying potential mentors who provide the level and quality of instruction to model the practices that PEBC includes in its curriculum; and
- Ensuring adequate supports and training are in place for school leaders, mentor teachers, and residents to implement the residency model.

District partners highlighted PEBC's focus on leadership development and reflective practice as strengths of the program. One partner noted that the district was attracted to the expertise and resources PEBC had to offer around developing shared leadership and collective ownership in schools because how teachers and principals contribute to the profession and leadership in the school is part of the state's educator effectiveness assessment. Another partner felt that PEBC shared a similar belief in the importance of continually reflecting and improving practice:

... I feel like that's what PEBC and the Boettcher Program is about too, is developing people, helping them learn and grow, and not placing so much emphasis on labels. That's what's really attractive to us, it's about learning and growing and reflecting on your practice and changing it. – Ruth DeCrescentis, Chief Human Resources Officer, Brighton School District 27J

PEBC staff and district partners reflected on what factors they believe will make district partnerships sustainable and institutionalized. Interviews revealed the following key characteristics that define successful partnerships:

- Strong leadership and vision at multiple levels, including district, school, and classroom;
- A commitment to the program from a broad swath of district leadership so that the program may continue through personnel changes;
- PEBC responsiveness to districts' needs; to effectively support residents, mentor teachers, and broader school systems; and to support schools in changes to state-mandated educator effectiveness and student assessments;
- Continual open communication; and
- The ability to demonstrate the effectiveness of the program.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

With the hiring of a full-time recruitment manager in the past year, PEBC has been able to expand and improve upon their recruitment strategies. The new manager has allowed for year-round recruitment efforts. During the past year, the program also increased the number of information sessions hosted at the PEBC office. PEBC staff report that these sessions have been effective in modeling for prospective candidates some of the core elements of the program, by including activities such as group collaborations and personal reflections. Doing these types of activities allows attendees to see how comfortable they are in a collaborative and reflective environment, which characterizes the residency experience. Other recruitment strategies have included newspaper, magazine and radio advertisements, as well as online postings on social media and job posting websites. The program also has begun posting at university career centers, and working with specific departments at universities to target particular types of candidates (e.g., recruiting from math and science departments to identify STEM candidates). PEBC recently put in place tracking systems to monitor which recruitment strategies are most effective, including an application question asking how the applicant heard about the program and exploring the use of web analytics.

RURAL RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

As mentioned above, the Quality Teacher Recruitment Grant has allowed PEBC to increase its reach into rural areas. Expansion into rural districts has influenced recruitment and preparation processes for the program. Program staff indicate that in rural districts there is a greater need for face-to-face interactions to support recruitment activities and partnerships, rather than relying on e-mail and phone. PEBC recognizes the importance of working closely with rural communities to determine their specific needs, as well as finding candidates who desire to live and teach in a small rural environment and will be satisfied in their positions.

PEBC staff indicate that they have learned a great deal in the past year about successful rural recruitment approaches, and they plan to continue refining their strategies and the responsibilities of the recruitment manager position moving forward. In the future, PEBC would like rural recruitment strategies to include:

- Developing more opportunities for in-person recruiting and relationship building in rural communities;
- Supporting communities to develop a “grow your own” model of recruitment, in which community members and high school students are encouraged to become teachers in their communities, and are guided through higher education pathways into the residency program; and
- Reaching out to universities in neighboring states to recruit qualified individuals who were raised in other rural communities.

PEBC’s partnership with Adams State University’s Teacher Education Department has been especially helpful in meeting rural recruitment needs. Through this partnership, Adams State is able to identify students in the department, and other departments at the university, who might be good candidates for PEBC’s program. Undergraduate students are informed about the program well before they graduate, and Adams State field directors work with professors to identify students who may be interested in the program. Field directors then reach out to interested students and provide them with additional information about PEBC’s program.

The alternative induction model also influences the recruitment process for rural districts. For example, sometimes principals will notify PEBC about candidates they plan to hire for specific positions that they would like PEBC to consider for the program. Sometimes, districts will ask PEBC to fill a very specific position, such as a secondary science teacher who is strong in physics, or an elementary teacher who is strong in math. When working with these candidates identified by the district, PEBC is careful to present the program to applicants in a way that ensures that they understand the difference between alternative induction and the traditional residency model.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Broadly, PEBC seeks candidates who want to make a long-term commitment to serving as an educator in high-need communities, and who truly believe that all students can succeed, regardless of the challenges they may face. PEBC also looks for candidates who are self-aware and able to reflect on the role of identity, cultural differences, and power dynamics when working with diverse student populations. To be successful, candidates need to be flexible, resilient, able to handle stress, and able to quickly apply constructive feedback to continually improve their practice. More specifically, there are seven research-based core dispositions that PEBC actively seeks in its residents:

1. Learning Orientation (e.g., embraces role of teacher as a learner; recognizes that effective teachers never stop learning; displays openness to new ideas and solutions).
2. Reflectiveness (e.g., engages in reflective practice to continually improve teaching; shows awareness of the whole child; recognizes the impact of a broad range of factors upon student learning).
3. Relationships (e.g., believes that understanding students' experiences allows for more effective teaching; recognizes the power of relationship in foster students' academic achievement, identity development, and sense of agency).
4. Identity (e.g., understands the role of experience on identity as teacher and learner; explores how culture, language, race, class, and gender influence who we are and how we think about teaching and learning).
5. Professionalism (e.g., demonstrates positive attitudes and work habits; contributes to teams; incorporates a leadership orientation).
6. Efficacy/Agency (e.g., believes that teachers can make a difference in all students' learning; acknowledges struggling as a teacher is part of the learning process; uses a problem-solving approach both individually and collectively).
7. Best Practice (e.g., examines the research on best practices and the implications for teaching and learning; understands deeply the role of content knowledge teaching and learning).

Representatives of partner districts who were interviewed expressed that they look for many of these characteristics as well, and appreciate that PEBC shares their values.

You need to be interested in other cultures, you need to realize that there are other cultures and that you have inherent biases because everyone does. Being curious about the world, having traveled, having had experiences outside of education, those are things I look for to serve our student population...you want people who understand differences. –Ruth DeCrescentis, Chief Human Resources Officer, Brighton School District 27J

PEBC uses a variety of tools to assess candidates for its program, including:

- The candidate's initial application;
- Résumés and transcripts;
- Essays;
- Individual and group interviews;
- The Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i), a validated instrument that assesses domains of emotional intelligence and sub-scales of those domains, such as intra- and interpersonal, stress management, adaptability, and general mood (Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations, 2013);
- The Haberman Star Teacher Pre-screener, a validated instrument that assesses potential teachers on a number of domains measuring characteristics of effective educators, such as persistence, theory to practice, approach to students, and fallibility (Haberman Educational Foundation, 20016). PEBC selected this instrument, in part, because of its use in several districts; and
- An internal rubric assessing core dispositions.

SELECTION PROCESS

PEBC has a multi-stage selection process, and staff reference the list of core dispositions during each stage of the recruitment process to determine whether an individual possesses the qualities that they look for in a candidate. Prospective candidates apply online and submit several documents, including a résumé, official university transcripts, two letters of recommendation, and two essays. One essay is a statement of purpose that asks candidates to write about why they want to become a teacher in a high-need school, why they are interested in teaching in an urban or rural environment, how their previous experiences have prepared them for this work, and why they are interested in this particular program. The second essay asks candidates to describe any obstacles they have overcome in their own life and how they confronted them, as well as interactions they have had with people from diverse backgrounds.

Qualified candidates are invited to an in-person individual interview, during which they are asked several questions focused on the core dispositions. Successful candidates are then invited to a group interview, during which they answer questions and complete small group activities with other candidates, such as reading, and discussing and presenting on an article about culturally relevant and responsive teaching. This process allows the interview committee to observe applicants' dispositions in a collaborative environment.

Candidates who successfully pass the group interview are provisionally admitted into the program, pending a successful match to a partner district and mentor teacher. Provisionally admitted candidates observe and interview with six to nine different mentor teachers, and both mentors and candidates share feedback about the potential match. Once a candidate secures a match with a mentor teacher, the candidate is formally admitted into the program. Program staff indicate that it is unusual that provisionally admitted candidates are unable to find successful

matches, and candidates are generally paired with their first or second choice in mentors. For candidates in the alternative induction model, a district must have agreed to hire them before acceptance into the program, and the number of potential mentor teachers may be more limited.

PREPARATION

The preparation model centers around a parallel pedagogy, in which residents are completing coursework, engaging in intensive clinical practice, and receiving job-embedded coaching. In developing its curriculum, PEBC draws on multiple fields of study, including education, social science and professional adult learning. There are seven strands of curriculum woven throughout the coursework:

- Classroom environment;
- Facilitating student understanding;
- Standards and assessment;
- Teaching-learning cycle;
- Culturally-responsive pedagogy;
- Professionalism; and
- Contemplative practice/Mindfulness/Wellness.

In addition to teaching coursework, the seminar instructors also observe in candidates' classrooms and offer feedback so that they can quickly adapt seminar content to be responsive to the needs of the candidates. The model is designed to facilitate making direct links between coursework/theory and practice. Instructors also model the lesson planning and delivery techniques that they want residents to take into the classroom, a strategy that is supported by research in teacher preparation.

Much of the seminars' overall content is the same for all candidates, regardless of subject area, grade level, and school placement. Program staff believe it is beneficial for candidates to be exposed to multiple learning contexts and to have conversations that span teaching in different subjects and grade levels, so that they have a fuller picture of K-12 education as a whole. This is accomplished through group conversations in seminars and visiting each other's classrooms. Coursework will vary, however, based on subject area and grade level to ensure that candidates have deeper instruction in the areas in which they will be teaching.

Training begins with a summer session that is offered in multiple locations to accommodate candidates from both urban and rural districts. Candidates receive credit for the session through Adams State University. The summer session involves team building, norms and expectation setting (professionalism), an overview of the year to come, the gradual release model, the seven strands of curriculum, classroom management, and an introduction to cultural responsiveness and self-reflection.

In the traditional residency model, residents will spend their first year of the program working alongside a mentor teacher four days a week, and will attend a seminar with their cohort one day a

week. The gradual release model allows residents to take on greater responsibility in the classroom as the year progresses. Residents are observed by and given feedback from field directors, as well as their mentors. Simultaneously, residents are working toward earning their licensure at the end of the first year and their Masters of Arts in Education degree, which they will receive at the end of the second year. Once residents become full-time teachers of record, they continue to receive ongoing training and professional development, including evening sessions, participation in school-based Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), observation and feedback, and one-on-one support.

PEBC staff indicated that expansion into rural communities is requiring adjustments to the teacher preparation process and how they provide support to candidates placed as teachers of record through the alternative induction model. Specifically, PEBC is examining the capacity for candidate support in each district. PEBC has had to rethink how the mentor relationship can provide support to candidates placed through alternative induction, given that the candidate and mentor will not teach in the same classroom. Mentor support is frequently more limited than in the traditional model. In practice, often the amount of support available from a mentor teacher is exhausted at the start of the school year, and the field directors provide guidance for the remainder of the year. Mentors also may teach a different subject area or grade level as the candidate. As teachers of record may not be available for weekly seminars, PEBC staff expressed a need to be open to altering the model, for example by having a stronger online component. PEBC also recognized and heard from teachers of record who were placed through the alternative induction method in rural districts that they would like additional support and more opportunity to share and reflect with each other. In response to these concerns, PEBC began working with Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), both new and existing, to have veteran and mentor teachers lead seminars on key issues in the classroom, such as classroom control. Teacher candidates also will meet at restaurants once a month to talk about challenges in the classroom.

ADAMS STATE UNIVERSITY – PEBC’S HIGHER EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

PEBC interviewees’ indicated that it is important to have a higher education partner that will build or modify its curriculum to fit with PEBC’s model. PEBC’s current higher education partnership is with Adams State University, located in the San Luis Valley. The relationship began about two and a half years ago, when PEBC approached Adams State about partnering for the teacher preparation aspect of its program. Adams State felt that PEBC was a good match for their Teacher Education Department philosophically and was excited to create this partnership. They also appreciate that PEBC is interested in understanding the needs of rural districts and working within that context, rather than simply bringing a predefined program to the area.

Before recruiting and placing residents, PEBC and staff from Adams State’s Teacher Education Department spent a year co-constructing the curriculum, talking with districts, selecting mentor teachers, and providing training and education as necessary. There are currently two field directors employed by Adams State who lead the seminars and coursework for PEBC residents

and go into the field to observe residents and provide feedback, mentoring and support. The field directors model the type of pedagogy they would like residents to implement in the classroom during the seminars and coursework. Because they are observing residents in the classroom, field directors also are able to adapt the curriculum to respond to the issues residents are facing in the classroom at any given moment.

PEBC and Adams State report many benefits from their collaboration. For example, PEBC indicated that the partnership has allowed the program to enhance the integration of theory and practice from previous years, through the dynamic approach to coursework, practice, observation, feedback, and ongoing program refinement. PEBC also reported benefits from the partnership with Adams State through access to its existing Teacher Education Department and relationships with districts in the area. The field directors at Adams State have been able to act as a liaison between PEBC and the districts in the teacher placement process. Adams State reported benefits from the partnership through PEBC's capacity-building efforts among districts in the San Luis Valley and the professional development and capacity-building opportunities it has presented to Adams State and its Teacher Education Department. Furthermore, the partnership with PEBC has allowed Adams State's Teacher Education Department to strengthen its relationship with other departments on campus, such as math, science, physical education, history, art, and music, as it partners with those departments to recruit candidates.

PLACEMENT

Placement is a highly collaborative process with feedback coming from principals, mentors, residents, and with Adams State serving as a link between PEBC and rural partner districts. Placement in rural areas also has been flexible depending on the needs of the districts – for example, one district is using the residency model for some candidates, the alternative induction model for another candidate, and a hybrid of the two models for another candidate. The primary factors that are considered when placing residents are the district's needs, the school's capacity to support the resident, and the dispositions of the mentor and resident. Adams State facilitates the placement process through its understanding of district and school needs and environments. Other factors that might be considered include candidates' personal situations, such as availability of reliable transportation, and financial ability to relocate.

Generally, PEBC first discusses placement strategy and overall vision with partner districts. Districts then decide in which schools residents will be placed. Once schools are identified, district personnel contact school principals. One district partner noted the need to identify schools with "forward-thinking" leadership that will be 1) willing to invest resources in training teachers for the good of the wider district, and 2) open to the school-wide professional development offered by the program. When principals agree to place residents in their schools, they will then nominate mentor teachers. Because it is important that mentor teachers provide high quality instruction, PEBC observes and interviews the prospective mentors to ensure that their teaching practices meet the requirement to become a mentor teacher, and that they have the needed dispositions to

coach a novice teacher. Once a resident is provisionally admitted to the program, he or she observes and interviews potential mentors, who have been selected based on their content knowledge and potential fit with the dispositions of the resident. PEBC considers feedback from both mentors and residents when deciding on final placements.

After placement, PEBC uses a number of tools and data to assess the effectiveness of teachers, including the following:

- PEBC data
 - Observations of teachers in the classrooms
 - Resident Teacher Development Rubric that is aligned with Colorado’s Teacher Quality Standards, with additional items related to PEBC’s core dispositions and reflective practice
 - The resident must achieve proficiency, at a minimum, in alignment with state standards. In some cases PEBC uses a more rigorous standard to achieve proficiency
 - Mentor teacher evaluations
 - Principal evaluations with feedback on student outcomes, as well as candidates’ ability to be effective practitioners and problem-solvers
- District data
 - Student achievement/growth data
 - School/district performance frameworks
 - Subject-specific or grade level-specific performance rubrics

PEBC also is considering using student feedback surveys, but this has not yet been implemented.

Placements are considered successful in the short-term when candidates have a positive, collaborative relationship with their mentor teacher, are reflective, open to feedback, show growth in their practice, and have built relationships with their students. Placements are considered successful in the long-term when candidates improve student achievement and outcomes, collaborate with other teachers and take on leadership roles in the school, complete their full service commitment, and desire to remain in the district to teach or move into leadership positions after their five-year contract.

PROGRAM STRENGTHS

Interviewees identified several strengths of the PEBC model, including 1) a rigorous selection process that includes a responsive and flexible approach; 2) the extended clinical practice and integrated curriculum; 3) the strong, thoughtful use of mentors with the traditional residency model; and 4) PEBC’s collaborative approach to working with districts.

RIGOROUS SELECTION PROCESS

Both PEBC staff and district partners agree that the highly rigorous nature of the selection and admission process is a strength of the program, helping to ensure successful placements and outcomes. To support the rigorous process, the recruitment manager is dedicated to regularly communicating with prospective candidates and personalizing the application process to guide them through it, as well as making sure applicants fully understand the intensive requirements and potential challenges of the program. This allows candidates the opportunity to reflect on whether or not they may be a good fit for the program. Districts also appreciate PEBC's efforts to tailor their recruitment and selection to meet district needs, and the opportunity to recruit someone with whom they already work (i.e., to 'grow one of their own').

EXTENDED CLINICAL PRACTICE AND INTEGRATED CURRICULUM

PEBC staff and partners feel that the extended clinical practice improves the student teaching experience and better prepares residents to teach in their own classrooms. The full-year residency allows residents to spend more time as student teachers, and places them in the classroom almost immediately to determine whether teaching and the program are a good fit. Both PEBC staff and district partners also cited the integrated, rather than layered, curriculum and the ability for residents to continually link theoretical coursework to practice as a strength of the teacher preparation model. Because residents are completing courses and seminars simultaneously with their residency work, the curriculum allows residents to observe, apply, and reflect on theory as they learn it.

STRONG, THOUGHTFUL USE OF MENTORS

Another strength highlighted about the program is the thoughtful consideration put into finding the best possible mentor-resident matches and the gradual release of instructional responsibility to residents. PEBC staff also cited the training and substantial support for mentor teachers. Both district partners and program staff felt that this model provided an ideal context for residents to learn, practice, and reflect.

There's this gradual release of responsibility, so that the candidate becomes independent for a certain period but they're not just cut loose. So it's not you're independent now and forever, they are cut loose for a couple of weeks and can then reflect on that, and you have someone to talk with about that. Not just your mentor, but the whole cohort of folks who are going through this with you. – Ruth DeCrescentis, Chief Human Resources Officer, Brighton School District
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COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO WORKING WITH DISTRICTS

District partners said that PEBC's sensitivity to the unique needs of different schools and districts, its willingness to work collaboratively with individual districts, and its flexible approach to placements are strengths that help ensure successful partnerships. Districts also appreciate how the organization brings an outside perspective into their schools to help promote reflection and improvement. One district partner noted the excellent listening and facilitation PEBC provided when conducting a training on shared leadership:

We had a training to lay the foundation. We got done, in five hours, more than we have gotten done in months. And that was the first session that we had facilitated by PEBC...it's amazing to me that through conversations of about two hours, and sharing some documents back and forth, that a group could come in and deliver, spot-on, on the money, exactly what we needed to move us forward.
-Laura Galido, Executive Director of Human Resources, Durango School District 9-R

CHALLENGES

Some of the key challenges identified by program staff and partners include: 1) the complex and resource intensive nature of the program; 2) building district capacity and identifying and/or training strong mentor teachers in turnaround districts; 3) state-mandated assessments of teachers of record; 4) identifying and recruiting diverse and STEM candidates who meet PEBC and district needs; and 5) meeting growing demands for the program.

COMPLEX AND RESOURCE INTENSIVE PROGRAM

One of the primary challenges of PEBC's model is its complexity and the amount of resources required to implement. PEBC must build capacity and put structures in place to implement intentional, parallel or integrated pedagogy, and it must find high-quality candidates with the core dispositions that it seeks. The model is labor intensive, which can be difficult for districts on tight budgets, particularly in rural areas. Districts, principals, administrators, and mentors must support additional work and financial costs to implement the program, including the administrative time to manage the program and relationships, the financial resources to help support the resident, the financial and time commitment associated with preparing mentors and compensating them for their role, and the time commitment asked of residents in the program. PEBC attempts to be flexible in dealing with financial challenges and often funds the Year Zero work in rural districts, but ultimately will need districts to contribute financially to establish a long-term partnership.

WORKING WITH TURNAROUND DISTRICTS

Working with turnaround districts can be challenging, especially when schools do not have teachers modeling strong enough practice to serve as mentors and when schools are experiencing leadership changes and/or high turnover. Particularly in rural areas, PEBC has spent significant time building capacity within some districts and preparing mentor teachers before they can place residents. PEBC staff also noted challenges can arise with abrupt changes in hiring timelines or needs, and the uncertainty that can result from changes in leadership. To mitigate the impact of changes in leadership as much as possible, PEBC strives to establish broad support for the program at both the school and the district level and prefers not to place candidates in a school with a new principal.

STATE-MANDATED ASSESSMENTS OF EDUCATOR EFFECTIVENESS

The increased rigor of state-mandated teacher evaluation, which is largely based on student growth, also presents a challenge. Because measures of student growth are attached to the teacher of record (the mentor teacher), some mentor teachers may be hesitant to share their classroom and eventually turn control of the classroom over to a resident teacher. One district partner indicated that they will be working with PEBC to investigate successful co-teaching models to address these concerns.

RECRUITING DIVERSE AND STEM CANDIDATES

Recruiting diverse candidates who meet the demographic and content needs of districts is challenging. Recruiting STEM candidates is also a challenge. Although PEBC has identified strategies to recruit and retain exceptional teachers for rural school districts, staff acknowledge that the pool of qualified applicants who are prepared to live and teach in rural communities is small. They plan to confront this challenge by forming strong relationships within partner communities, as well as looking for candidates from rural communities outside of Colorado.

GROWING DEMANDS FOR THE PROGRAM

Over the past year, the recruitment pool has grown substantially due, in part, to hiring a new recruitment manager. Thus, a new challenge for PEBC has been to effectively handle the greater number of inquiries and applications. PEBC is looking to develop more effective tracking systems and technological capacity to handle the increase in volume. It has also been a challenge to support out-of-state applicants, especially in timing the group interviews, which take place in Colorado. However, PEBC has been open to working around applicants' schedules and locations by offering alternatives to the in-person interviews when necessary.

TEACH FOR AMERICA

Teach For America (TFA) is a national teacher preparation program that was founded to reduce educational inequities. The primary goal of TFA is to eliminate the achievement gap through the recruitment of individuals with strong academic or leadership backgrounds to teach in high-need schools and communities, creating life-long advocates for education, both within the field of education and outside of it. Specifically, TFA takes a two-pronged approach to achieve this goal:

- They seek to build capacity and reduce the achievement gap by recruiting high-quality candidates to become corps members and teach in a high-need/hard-to-serve school.
- They seek to decrease educational inequities by creating alumni who will serve as leaders and advocates for change in educational policy and ideology, regardless of their profession after their TFA experience.

Corps members make a two-year commitment to teach in a Title I or similar school that has been deemed hard-to-staff, or hard-to-serve. The program provides teacher preparation, training, and continued professional development throughout the two-year commitment. Ideally, corps members will continue to teach beyond their initial commitment, and while a number do continue to teach, many also go on to work in other fields such as medicine or law, where TFA hopes they will advocate around educational issues.

TFA includes 48 regions throughout the United States. The organization established a region in Colorado in 2007. TFA-Colorado's regional office and Executive Director are located in Denver, and the organization has recently hired a Deputy Executive Director to support local efforts in the Colorado Springs area.

The national organization does not provide an overarching set of goals or requirements for regions. Rather, TFA-Colorado sets region-specific goals around acquisition and retention of teachers that align with TFA's overall mission at the national level. In Colorado, TFA's primary goals are to create culturally responsive teachers and eliminate the achievement gap in test scores, graduation rates, and college acceptance rates between low-income/minority students and higher income/non-minority students.

Figure 2 provides a brief visual overview of the process by which TFA-Colorado corps members are recruited, trained and placed. Detailed information on partnerships, recruitment, selection, preparation, and placement is provided in the sections below.

Figure 2: TFA-Colorado Visual Overview

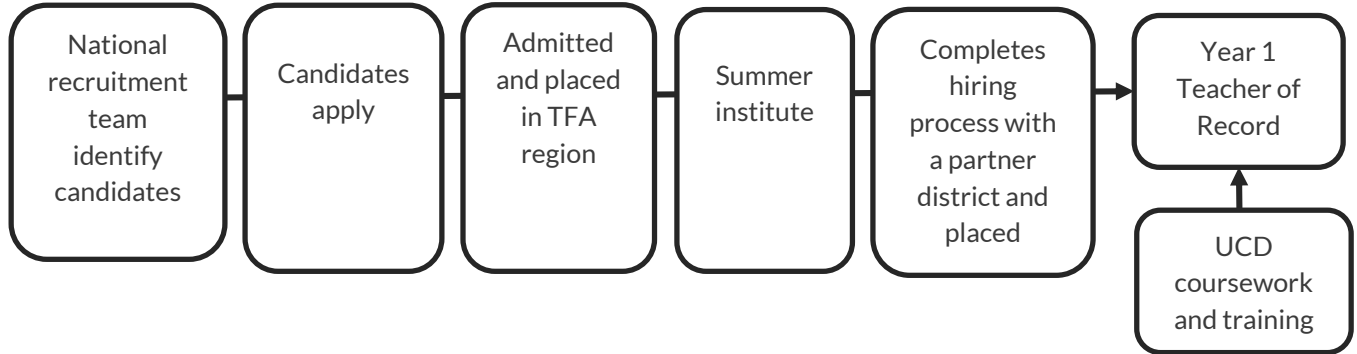


Figure note: University of Colorado (UCD), Denver, ASPIRE to Teach Program, is TFA-Colorado’s Institute of Higher Education Partner.

DISTRICT PARTNERS

Using the Quality Teacher Recruitment grant funds, TFA-Colorado plans to strengthen current relationships with Denver Public Schools and Harrison School District 2, and to establish a new relationship with one additional district - Pueblo City Schools. District selection for the grant was a practical decision based on the amount of funding required to implement the program effectively in each partner district, and in collaboration with PEBC, to ensure that each grantee served unique regions in the state to maximize reach. The chosen districts have demonstrated a clear need for high-quality teachers, support TFA’s model, and desire to work with them.

When determining whether a district will be a good fit with TFA’s model, TFA-Colorado considers both school and student characteristics. TFA-Colorado talks with district and school leadership as part of this process, as well as looks at other indicators. Some of the factors TFA-Colorado considers are:

- Student outcomes such as retention, dropout rate, and performance on standardized assessments;
- Student demographics in the district and school where corps members will be placed;
- Percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch;
- Number of classrooms taught by long or short-term substitute teachers;
- The number and types of vacancies districts are struggling to fill;
- Whether the district and school leadership believe there is an inequity in education and will be a good fit with TFA’s leadership model;
- Whether the district will treat TFA-Colorado corps members in the same manner as other teachers in the district (e.g., same pay scale, hiring process, evaluation process);
- The learning theories, and academic and assessment model, used by the district; and
- Whether there are local donors within the community, in addition to national donors, who are willing to support TFA-Colorado.

To be considered a TFA partner, the district must contain at least one Title I school. Other factors are examined as part of the partnership process and are viewed in the broader context of what will best meet students' needs in the district.

TFA recognizes the importance of establishing strong relationships with the communities in which corps members teach to ensure they are responsive to local district needs. As a result, TFA has been shifting elements of their teacher preparation model at the national level and in Colorado to acknowledge this, and the Quality Teacher Recruitment Grant will support these efforts in Colorado.

TFA is not an organization that is working in a silo. The goal for TFA is to truly be a part of the community in which it lives, to come up with long-term goals and plans that are in unison with other nonprofits and other community organizations in that city or state. – Amanda Skrzypchak, Director of Matriculation and Placement, TFA Colorado

Once a partnership has been established, TFA-Colorado develops specific strategies, in collaboration with the district and principals, to address the district and schools' unique needs. An example in Colorado is TFA's partnership with a district that has a high percentage of students of color, a high percentage of students who are part of the reduced-price lunch program, a heavy military influence, and several other programs available for low-income families. TFA-Colorado works with corps members placed in that district to help them understand the community context and programs available to students, and to provide support to the corps members around culturally responsive instruction and ensuring students have the support they need to succeed in school.

Both existing district partners and new partners report that their relationship with TFA-Colorado is positive. In addition to being a resource for highly qualified candidates, TFA's philosophy toward education and its model of placing individuals with a desire to teach and make a difference in hard-to-serve schools aligns closely with that of the districts. According to one district partner:

I think philosophically, these are generally people who want to work in an area with at-risk/high-needs student populations. I think their desire to help those students goes a long way. They bring a lot of positivity, and they believe that they can be the change agents in the world.... And this is good because in our schools and our community, it is challenging, and we definitely need people who really have the desire to be here with our students and are up to that challenge. – Pamela Aragon, Director of Human Capital, Harrison School District 2

Districts and TFA-Colorado also recognize the value in strong communication and a collaborative approach regarding district needs. TFA-Colorado works closely with schools and districts to identify content needs and to ensure a positive match is made between the corps members and the schools in which they will teach. Districts report that TFA-Colorado is knowledgeable about corps members and responsive to concerns in the placement process, something they say they do not experience with all teacher preparation programs. District partners also have positive impressions of TFA and its recruitment and preparation process. While district partners did not know the specific components of the recruitment and preparation process, they know that recruitment is highly selective, that candidates complete a summer institute, that candidates have a few days of time in Colorado before they begin teaching, and that TFA provides ongoing professional development.

When asked what would make district partnerships sustainable or institutionalized, TFA-Colorado staff and partners highlighted 'soft' factors, such as strong communication, as well as logistical considerations, such as how the licensure process is handled. Other factors mentioned include:

- Mutual respect and support between TFA, districts, teacher unions, and other relevant entities;
- Provision of high-quality corps members who are effective in the classroom;
- Continued professional development and training for corps members to ensure they receive training that would otherwise be provided in a traditional teacher education program;
- Success of the program, including high retention of teachers; and
- Development of leadership capacity in the school over time.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

TFA's recruitment and selection process occurs at the national level and involves two stages: recruitment and admissions. National recruiters first identify individuals who exhibit the leadership characteristics TFA seeks in candidates and encourages them to apply to the program. Candidates then complete an admissions process before they are formally admitted to the program and assigned to the region in which they will teach. TFA's recruitment and admissions approach is designed based on the following beliefs: 1) leadership is a core skill for successful educators, 2) there are specific leadership characteristics that predict when an individual will be effective in the classroom, and 3) identification of individuals with these characteristics will allow TFA to build a corps of high-quality candidates to serve in high-need areas.

TFA conducts an annual review of data on its most effective teachers over the 25 years it has been in operation. The organization has identified eight core competencies that predict the type of leadership required to become an effective teacher and advocate in the field of education. These competencies are:

1. Leadership and achievement – A strong record of achievement in multiple areas and in difficult circumstances.
2. Grit or attitude – Staying positive.
3. Perseverance – Staying the course.
4. Influence and motivating – Interpersonal skills.
5. Organization – Planning, and meeting deadlines even with chaos.
6. Building relationships in diverse communities – Overcoming differences.
7. Critical thinking – A high level of logical and practical thinking.
8. Fit with mission – Belief in the potential of all children and a desire to help with educational inequity.

Recruiters seek candidates who demonstrate these characteristics and encourage them to apply to the program. TFA reports that its process is robust, highly selective, and competitive.

THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

TFA implements numerous recruitment strategies, many of which target college campuses. According to one TFA staff member, 70-75% of all incoming corps members are from universities, and higher education partnerships are instrumental in identifying potential candidates for the program. TFA has relationships with the Chancellors and Presidents at all major universities in Colorado and works to create partnerships at multiple levels within the universities. These efforts result in a shared commitment to recruiting candidates for the TFA program. For example, some universities in Colorado have paid to host dinner events with prospective TFA candidates. TFA feels that these types of efforts are important to demonstrate to students that campus leadership supports TFA's program. Some of TFA's primary recruitment efforts at college and university campuses include:

- Hosting or attending events;
- E-mailing/contacting faculty at local campuses for recommendations;
- Establishing partnerships with a variety of academic and community organizations;
- Targeting students with high academic achievement (e.g., students who are on the Dean's List, have a high GPA, or have signifiers around academic achievement such as membership in Phi Beta Kappa); and
- Targeting individuals who are involved in mission-aligned work, such as work with America Reads or the Breakthrough Collaborative (a program where college students teach summer school in low-income communities).

A new recruitment strategy that TFA began implementing last year is to create an early deadline for college juniors to apply. Previously, candidates had to be graduating that year or a professional. TFA has developed additional teacher preparation activities to utilize with those candidates they've admitted as juniors to help them prepare for the program.

TFA also recruits individuals interested in changing careers to teaching; career changers now compose 30% of TFA's corps. TFA uses a similar recruitment approach with professionals and

career changers as they do with college campuses. They create partnerships with ‘well-known talent organizations’ such as Google, IBM, City Year, and the military and work with those organizations to identify high-achieving individuals who possess the qualities TFA believes will make a good teacher. In addition, TFA has created an initiative, known as ‘You Served For America, Now Teach For America’ to recruit veterans into the program. Recruitment strategies TFA uses for both college students and professionals include:

- Targeting well-respected staff and members at high-performing educational or professional organizations;
- Utilizing key influencers and friend networks/word of mouth to encourage potential candidates to apply;
- Removing obstacles that might prevent someone from choosing to join TFA (e.g., working with a candidate to defer other opportunities until they’ve completed participation in TFA); and
- Using internet websites to identify individuals who are job-seeking.

THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

After recruitment, candidates submit a formal application for the TFA program. Candidates are assessed on leadership attributes, academic achievement, and interpersonal qualities. TFA uses the following tools to determine selection into the program:

- The candidate’s initial application;
- Résumés and transcripts;
- Written assessments;
- Standardized tests;
- Individual and group interviews; and
- A rubric measuring the core competencies.

After a candidate submits an initial application, TFA staff review his or her résumé, GPA, transcripts, extra-curricular and leadership activities, and responses to short-answer questions to assess candidate alignment with TFA’s mission. Qualified candidates are invited to participate in an initial phone interview and an all-day session that includes a group interview, a sample lesson, a group conversation/activity, an individual question assessment that includes highly charged topics, and a one-hour individual interview. The day also involves the use of video vignettes, reflections, and role play. Candidates submit written assessments, complete standardized tests, and complete a web-based activity with situations they might find in the classroom. When necessary, TFA will conduct an additional final interview with the candidate.

Throughout this process, TFA assesses and scores participants on the eight core competencies using a rubric called the Selections and Admissions Model. All of TFA’s materials, including the standardized test it administers to participants, were developed internally. In making the determination of who to admit into the program, TFA balances the candidate’s scores on the competencies with interviewer recommendations about the candidate. TFA also has a post-

interview quality control process to ensure the program is upholding high standards and that those admitted into the program possess high potential.

RECRUITMENT OF DIVERSE CANDIDATES

Nationally, TFA has set goals on the overall size and diversity of its corps and the program is implementing a number of initiatives to increase diversity among corps members. In particular, within the broader national recruitment team, there is a Latino Engagement and Partnerships Team that is dedicated to recruitment of Latino candidates. They conducted a summit in Colorado last year on Latino leadership, and they have created partnerships with the Hispanic Scholarship Fund, the Hispanic Heritage Foundation, and other Latino service organizations.

Although recruitment efforts at the national level are not affected by the Quality Teacher Recruitment Grant, there are some areas in which TFA-Colorado has expanded or modified recruitment as a result of the grant. The grant has allowed regional staff to support the national recruitment team in initiatives that are helping to create a more diverse TFA corps nationally and within Colorado. One of these areas is TFA-Colorado's support of the Regional Diversity Initiative in which TFA-Colorado is seeking diverse candidates from Colorado to be placed in Colorado schools. The goal of this initiative is to increase the likelihood that corps members will remain in Colorado, either in the classroom or working on educational policy issues within the state, after they complete the program. Another approach TFA-Colorado is using to recruit a more diverse corps is to expand the recruitment pool of college campuses within Colorado. Specifically, TFA has begun recruiting from schools with a more diverse student body, such as CSU-Pueblo, Metro State, and CU-Denver.

TFA staff noted that this year's corps is its most diverse at the national level. About 45-47% of this year's national cohort are persons of color and/or low income. Although Colorado is currently one of the least diverse corps in the country, this year's Colorado cohort is also more diverse than in prior years with nearly 35% of corps members identifying as persons of color, low income, or as having received a Pell Grant (an indicator of low income).

PREPARATION

TFA-Colorado staff indicated that its teacher preparation program is based on TFA's years of experience preparing teachers to serve in high-need schools and on best practices in teacher preparation. They reported that the core elements of TFA's preparation model are constant across all placement types. Regardless of in which school or grade level a corps member will teach, TFA's model focuses on the development of leadership first and foremost, and on a core set of universal best practices in teaching.

At the end of the day, what we truly believe is that good teaching is good teaching... many people would argue that best practices in special education are honestly also best practices in elementary, or even Social Studies or English. – Amanda Skrzypchak, Director of Matriculation and Placement, TFA – Colorado

In addition to training on the core elements, TFA provides specific training in the pedagogical and technical areas to teach in specific grade levels and content areas, based on the type of placement corps members receive.

TFA-National handles the initial teacher preparation training. First, corps members complete an onboarding process that involves one to three hours of activities each week (e.g., reading a chapter and reflecting, classroom observations, tracking education-related state legislation activities). This period is focused on getting candidates in the mindset of being a teacher. Next, corps members complete a five-week summer institute in Tulsa, Oklahoma that is bracketed on each side by an induction process. The summer institute involves a combination of graduate level course work taught by veteran master teachers, participation in team-based teaching in summer schools with guidance and feedback from a veteran TFA advisor and the classroom teacher, and a variety of workshops and seminars that examine specific teaching skills or provide instruction specific to a particular grade level or subject area. During the induction periods, corps members that will be placed in Colorado also are registered with the University of Colorado – Denver ASPIRE program, which handles licensure, and are acquainted with information about Colorado as a state more generally. Corps members learn about the ecosystem in Colorado and the community in which they will be placed (e.g., how the community is unique, and the challenges and opportunities within the local context).

Throughout this process, the local Matriculation & Placement team offers support to corps members to help prepare them for the different environments in which they will teach. This support initially occurs during the induction and orientation periods, and continues once placed. Part of the support involves connecting corps members to alumni who have taught either in the same school or in a similar environment. TFA also interviews active corps members and alumni to gather information about each school to provide to incoming corps members about where they will be placed. In addition, TFA staff work with corps members to ensure they feel confident about content knowledge for their placement and on making the transition to living in Colorado or to living on a reduced salary.

Once corps members are placed in the classroom, TFA offers ongoing support and professional development. Ongoing support involves a combination of classroom observations by a TFA teacher coach, known as a Manager of Teacher Leadership and Development (MTLD), and through professional development activities. Corps members also complete the process for licensure during their first year of teaching, and complete the coursework for a Masters in Education during their second year teaching, if they choose to do so.

THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO – DENVER’S ASPIRE TO TEACH ALTERNATIVE LICENSURE PROGRAM – TFA-COLORADO’S HIGHER EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

Two years ago, TFA-Colorado and The University of Colorado-Denver’s ASPIRE to Teach Alternative Licensure Program (ASPIRE) developed a partnership to license TFA-Colorado corps members to teach in Colorado schools. Both the ASPIRE program and TFA-Colorado staff reported that transition of the alternative licensure process from TFA to the ASPIRE program grew out of TFA-Colorado’s desire to strengthen the pedagogy of the teacher preparation process and to improve the process for corps members. Philosophically, the two programs were a good match based on their focus on social justice and equity.

TFA-Colorado’s Matriculation and Placement team is responsible for ensuring the logistics of licensure, such as background checks, are completed. ASPIRE provides the required coursework for alternative licensure of TFA candidates and for the Masters in Critical Pedagogy or Special Education for those corps members who choose to pursue the Masters.

TFA-Colorado’s partnership with the ASPIRE program is unique from most other TFA regions. Specifically, in Colorado, the program integrates ASPIRE coursework for the alternative licensure process with observations by TFA’s MTLTD staff. The preparation corps members receive from the ASPIRE program and TFA involves both in-person and virtual elements, and courses are offered in the evenings and on weekends. The ASPIRE program coursework involves online modules that require corps members to engage in a particular instructional activity in the classroom, such as a guided reading, and corps members continue to work on the module until they achieve proficiency. Simultaneously, corps members receive practical support in the field from TFA MTLTDs, who conduct classroom observations and provide feedback to corps members. Through this process, MTLTDs are sometimes able to observe the activities required through the ASPIRE program.

The ASPIRE program and TFA-Colorado staff spent much of the first year of the partnership developing communication systems and learning how best to integrate the two different aspects of support and training they provide to corps members. In the second year of the partnership, these processes have been refined and strengthened, and staff from both organizations communicate regularly through Google docs, and meet monthly to discuss corps members’ progress in their coursework for ASPIRE and what the MTLTDs are observing in the classroom. This has allowed both programs to tailor their feedback and instruction to provide the best support possible to corps members.

PLACEMENT

TFA’s teacher placement process includes activities at the national and local level. According to TFA staff, there are three considerations at the national stage of the placement process:

- Candidate preferences – for example regional, grade level, subject area, bilingual setting;
- Candidate qualifications based on TFA’s regional designations – for example, does/will the candidate meet state certification requirements in the TFA region in which they will be placed; and
- District needs.

From the time they are admitted, TFA works with candidates on placement preferences. TFA determines the region where candidates will be placed and, broadly, what they will teach. Final placement within a region is handled by the region itself.

In Colorado, corps members must apply to and complete the hiring process at a given school in order to be placed. To identify district needs and create successful placements, TFA-Colorado interviews principals and the Human Resources Department to inquire about their needs. TFA-Colorado recognizes that each school is unique and seeks to learn about the school’s content needs and the characteristics of an ideal candidate for the placement school. There are three key steps to identify available positions for corps members within districts:

- Determine district needs – (e.g., elementary, teachers who are bilingual, etc.). TFA-Colorado will let the national team know what content areas are needed;
- Identify placements that support clustering corps members – TFA prefers that corps members are in schools with at least one or two other members for support; and
- Establish fit between school and corps member.

Senate Bill 191 includes a ‘mutual consent’ or ‘school-based hiring’ provision in which “teaching positions are filled at schools based upon the agreement by both the teacher and the principal (with input from other teachers at the school) that the teacher and the school are a good match that aligns well with the teacher’s qualifications, experience, and demonstrated effectiveness” (CDE, n.d., Senate Bill 10-191 – Mutual Consent). As a result, TFA-Colorado partners with districts to have a school’s principal interview corps members directly. The principal plays a primary role in selecting candidates, rather than placing candidates without input from school leaders or corps members, as might occur in other states. TFA-Colorado provides the district with access to a website that includes a list of candidates who are available for placement in that district and links to their résumés and profiles. Principals review the corps members listed on the website and TFA facilitates the initial connection and communication between districts/schools and corps members through the website. Once connected, districts reach out directly to candidates to schedule interviews.

Districts reported three different strategies they use when hiring TFA-Colorado candidates: 1) consistent with TFA-Colorado’s preferred approach, one district reported that once a potential candidate has been identified, the hiring process for that candidate is very similar to other non-TFA candidates; 2) a more informal process for TFA-Colorado candidates that is based on the districts’ trust of TFA’s vetting process during recruitment and admissions; and 3) a collaborative approach in which the district provides TFA-Colorado with a roster of open positions and content areas, and then TFA-Colorado facilitates an orientation between candidates and principals after

matching potential candidates to open positions. District responses to the placement process used in their district were positive.

Through this process that TFA has put together and that we have worked with, everybody was able to get a good solid relationship, we didn't have any misfits and we didn't turn anybody down. – Mark McPherson, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Pueblo City Schools

TFA-Colorado also seeks to place corps members in schools and communities that they will love. For example, one corps member expressed interest in writing and wanted to open an after-school writing center. TFA-Colorado found a principal who had a desire to strengthen the school's writing program and was willing to create an opportunity for that corps member to do so.

Once a corps member is placed, TFA-Colorado staff and district partners reported several ways in which they assess the effectiveness of a teacher. TFA administers a Principal Satisfaction survey annually, and gathers student achievement data, educator effectiveness data, and corps member retention data. District partners look at novice teacher data, educator effectiveness data, and conduct formal and short, unannounced spot observations. They also look at whether a principal is willing to bring the corps member back to teach in the school another year.

PROGRAM STRENGTHS

When asked about the strengths of the TFA program model, TFA staff and district partners highlighted several areas: 1) The rigorous and responsive recruitment, preparation, and placement process; 2) A focus on continuous quality improvement; 3) The needs-based, customized model; 4) Development of strong/trusting relationships with district and higher education partners; and 5) The integration of theory and practice in teacher preparation.

RIGOROUS RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION, AND PLACEMENT PROCESS

Staff and partners reported that TFA employs a rigorous model, from recruitment to evaluation of teacher effectiveness. TFA staff agree on the leadership qualities and competencies that support effective teaching and they exercise great efforts to recruit candidates who demonstrate those qualities. District partners indicate that TFA-Colorado provides high-quality candidates to place in their schools and they feel confident that candidates who pass the TFA screening and vetting process have the potential to become great teachers. One district partner noted that TFA-Colorado provided such exceptional candidates for principals that they requested additional corps members be placed in their schools.

They have some incredibly highly qualified and exceptional young people that really have a great desire to give back and serve, and/or just become a teacher because they love education. – Mark McPherson, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Pueblo City Schools

CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

TFA staff and partners found TFA's focus on continuous improvement, particularly within the Colorado region, as a strength. One TFA staff member indicated that the admissions process is not the same as it was several years ago because as TFA gathers stronger and more reliable data, it continues to refine its processes. TFA uses national data and research to assess the effectiveness of first- and second-year teachers and to identify gaps and barriers in pedagogy. TFA uses this information to provide support to teachers, and to refine the selection criteria for future recruitment efforts. One of TFA-Colorado's partners reported it was clear from its work with TFA-Colorado that the organization is genuinely committed to recognizing areas of weakness and working to strengthen them.

A RESPONSIVE MODEL

One staff member noted a strength of TFA's program is that it is needs-based. TFA works collaboratively with schools and districts that choose TFA as a partner, and TFA customizes the preparation corps members receive for the specific teaching environment. Another TFA staff member felt that TFA's efforts to get to know the big picture in a district, and to place candidates in schools where both the school and the candidate will feel it is a good fit, was a strength. District partners felt that TFA-Colorado was incredibly responsive to their needs around placement.

STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

District partners indicated that, first and foremost, they appreciate the relationship TFA-Colorado has established with their districts. One district noted that TFA-Colorado is an incredible resource and support to the district, and that district staff feel comfortable reaching out to TFA-Colorado if they have concerns about a candidate. When issues with a corps member are identified, district staff mentioned that TFA-Colorado provides support to the corps member in resolving issues. Another district expressed appreciation for the relationship that TFA-Colorado established with school leaders, and that principals are excited to have corps members placed in their schools because they know the corps members will work hard and go above and beyond. Their partnership with TFA-Colorado also has allowed them to place high quality candidates in positions they might not otherwise be able to fill for the school year.

THE INTEGRATION OF THEORY AND PRACTICE

TFA-Colorado and the ASPIRE program continue to develop and refine their integrated approach to training TFA-Colorado corps members. Both organizations feel this approach is enhancing the teacher preparation process for corps members and providing strong support and a well-balanced approach to the integration of theory and practice. The two organizations collaborate well to emphasize their areas of strength (theory taught during coursework through the ASPIRE program and coaching provided by MTLDs in the field). They continue to refine communication and other processes to ensure they identify needs and challenges and address those for corps members.

CHALLENGES

TFA's teacher recruitment, selection, preparation, and placement process involves coordination among national and Colorado-based TFA staff, and collaboration with local partners. TFA staff and partners were asked to identify challenges in recruiting, placing, and retaining highly effective teachers. Interviewees identified challenges in the following areas: 1) The two-year commitment model; 2) Recruiting diverse teachers; 3) Managing corps members' expectations; and 4) Coordinating teacher placements to meet district needs in a manner that is aligned with the TFA approach. Key informants also identified a few additional specific challenges that are noted at the end of this section.

THE TWO-YEAR COMMITMENT

Program partners noted some challenges associated with TFA's two-year commitment. For example, one district reported that the number of TFA candidates placed in the district has dropped over time due to the high turnover rate of teachers who left after their two-year commitment. Some principals in this district expressed concern with placing TFA teachers knowing that they may not be long-term hires. In addition, although interviewees commended the high quality of the TFA selection process, concern was expressed that some corps members may not be fully engaged in the training and invested in becoming a licensed teacher, especially in instances when corps members do not plan to continue in the field after the two-year experience. Finally, one interviewee noted that TFA, as an organization, has received feedback that it should encourage corps members to stay in the classroom longer than two years to better address program goals of reducing educational inequalities. To address some of these concerns, TFA-Colorado is one of several TFA regions participating in a Teach Beyond 2 campaign to encourage corps members to stay in the classroom beyond their two-year commitment, celebrate those alumni who do stay in the classroom through Alumni Excellence in Teaching Awards, and improve the retention rate of alumni.

RECRUITING DIVERSE TEACHERS

According to TFA staff, the recruitment pool of potential corps members in Colorado is not as diverse as it is in other regions. Staff report that many of the potential recruits from Colorado's universities are White and affluent, and seem to have less awareness about educational inequities than seen in other regions. The lack of diversity creates challenges in recruiting TFA corps members who will reflect the demographic characteristic of the communities and schools in which they will serve. The recruitment team expends tremendous effort in Colorado raising awareness so that candidates will have a deeper understanding of, and stronger commitment to, TFA's mission. Furthermore, as mentioned above, the recruitment team has expanded its partnerships to include more Colorado Institutes of Higher Education with diverse student bodies. The recruiter located in Colorado reported good progress in building relationships among diverse Colorado groups and identifying and recruiting Colorado candidates of color to apply for TFA. TFA-Colorado's support for the Regional Diversity Initiative is another effort to address this challenge.

MANAGING CORPS MEMBER EXPECTATIONS

Multiple key informants noted that TFA's highly selective recruitment and selection process can lead to the admission of some corps members from privileged backgrounds who have rarely failed to succeed or have limited experience outside their work with TFA. It was mentioned that recruiting such high-achieving individuals can sometimes lead to unrealistic expectations on the part of corps members about how quickly they can expect to see change within their own classrooms and in achieving TFA's overall mission. Furthermore, some corps members seem surprised by the demands of the job and sometimes struggle to adapt to their new contexts. This may be especially prevalent with corps members who have not experienced the types of challenges and situations that present themselves when teaching in traditionally hard-to-serve schools. TFA works to select members based on attributes that will predict successful placements, and to ready corps members through a rigorous preparation process. Nonetheless, managing some corps members' expectations was cited as a program challenge.

MEETING DISTRICT NEEDS WITHIN THE TFA MODEL

The process for placing corps members is dynamic. TFA-Colorado must make matches between schools and candidates in a way that meets district needs and fits within the TFA model. Particularly in the new rural partnerships, TFA-Colorado must identify the best method to ensure that it can provide the leadership, support and resources that are critical to the program over a dispersed area. Although these districts have a demonstrated need, they also have a lower number of students and open positions, making it challenging for TFA-Colorado to place clusters of corps members and provide the required supports. The high-need nature of the districts and schools can also mean high turnover with school leaders and human resources. Changes in school and district leadership may mean a new vision, direction, and relationship to build within that district.

In addition, TFA-Colorado commits to placing all corps members who successfully complete their training. When a majority of corps members have been placed, and TFA-Colorado is working to find positions for the few corps members who remain, TFA-Colorado may sometimes have to place a candidate where they cannot cluster corps members, or talk with districts about whether to place someone even if it may not be the best fit. TFA-Colorado is working to streamline and improve this process by developing ways to track the relevant data and working with districts in spring and early summer to identify early possible placement challenges (e.g., due to budget changes).

Furthermore, interviewees noted that monitoring and ensuring corps members are teaching in the proper content area can be a challenge. A corps member might have highly qualified status in one content area, but a Statement of Eligibility in another. Principals also may sometimes change a corps member's placement after they have been hired. If the corps member is not teaching in his or her area of endorsement, it can jeopardize TFA-Colorado's compliance with state law requirements around licensure, and create a stressful situation for the corps member, school, and district. Fortunately, this situation does not arise very often. One district partner also noted it is working with principals to ensure that this does not happen in the future.

Finally, two district partners noted that the timeline for hiring can be a challenge. Corps members are required to take the first position that they are offered. Some districts expressed concern that desirable candidates are placed before the district has the opportunity to recruit them. For example, one district partner noted delays within the district in moving the hiring process forward with corps members. As a result, the district has not always been able to coordinate with principals in the process. This district is considering a 'virtual job fair' for its schools that can be coordinated at the district level and held earlier in the year to allow the district to assist principals better in the hiring process and place corps members sooner. One district also indicated that it cannot hire a candidate until the candidate has completed the placement exam, PRAXIS or Colorado-specific PLACE, which can delay the hiring timeline.

OTHER CHALLENGES MENTIONED BY KEY INFORMANTS:

- Adapting recruitment strategies in response to the increasing use of social media on college campuses;
- Ensuring college students have a complete picture of TFA through accurate information, rather than one or two stories about TFA corps members posted through social media;
- The significant resources required to build leadership among corps members;
- The need to provide support to alumni, whether they are still teaching or have entered another field;
- Oversight of the alternative licensure process – one district had questions about how the new licensure process will affect its relationship with TFA-Colorado;
- A need to further improve the overall pedagogy beyond what is currently in place; and
- Hesitation by some principals to employ novice teachers.

Evaluation Next Steps

In December, 2013, CDE awarded grant funds to PEBC and TFA-Colorado to place 65 and 95 teachers, respectively, in 17 Colorado school districts by fall 2014-15. This report provides a summary of teacher placement data as of August, 2014 and presents findings from interviews with program leaders, program staff, and district and Institute of Higher Education partners. The purpose of the Year 1 evaluation report is to provide information on each program's approach to recruiting, preparing, and placing teachers, and, for each program, to identify early successes and challenges.

Several data sources will be used in Year 2 to continue formative learning and to conduct the summative evaluation. Specifically, at the end of October, 2014, vendors will provide OMNI with final placement data, which will allow the evaluation to report on the number of teachers placed by school, district, grade level, and subject area. In addition, OMNI will report on the number of students reached through final placements and the number and percent of teachers who are teaching in areas and grade levels for which they meet Highly Qualified requirements.

During late winter, spring 2015, OMNI will develop and host a survey for placed teachers to provide data on program experiences and on intentions to continue teaching in high-need schools and districts. OMNI will work collaboratively with program partners and CDE to develop the survey, and vendors will support teacher recruitment. Teacher perceptions will be critical in understanding key factors that influence teacher satisfaction and program success in retaining high-quality teachers.

In addition to the teacher survey, in 2015, OMNI will conduct a second phase of key informant interviews. OMNI will work closely with CDE to identify evaluation question areas. Based on initial findings and discussions, CDE has expressed interest in potentially pursuing the following topics in Year 2 interviews: further exploration of decision-making points in determining partnerships; PEBC's recruitment and selection process for mentor teachers, and experiences serving in the mentor role; experiences of candidates placed as teachers of record versus residents in their first year; principal and student perspectives; the role of peer learning; and TFA's Teach Beyond 2 Campaign to increase teacher retention. OMNI will work closely with CDE to prioritize question areas that will best address evaluation needs.

Finally, at the end of the 2014-15 academic year, after candidates have been teaching for one year, vendors committed to providing OMNI with educator effectiveness data. We anticipate several challenges to reporting on educator effectiveness. First, the program timeline presents inherent difficulty to obtain, analyze and report by the June 30th deadline. Vendors will need to obtain effectiveness ratings from partner districts and provide to OMNI sufficient detail on how ratings were calculated to ensure an accurate review of the information. Once OMNI receives the data and calculation information from vendors, OMNI analysts will need to prepare and examine the data. OMNI will work with vendors and CDE to establish the best method and timeline to address evaluation questions to promote careful and accurate analysis. Second, for PEBC,

candidates placed as residents will not have state-required educator effectiveness data. OMNI will work with PEBC program leaders to identify other data sources to address effectiveness for these candidates. Finally, district reporting of educator effectiveness data, using the new standards, is in its infancy. Districts may be at different stages in how they report effectiveness data. At this time, it is unclear whether the data will be consistent and comparable across districts. These issues, coupled with changes in Colorado's student assessments, will require careful thought and review to ensure appropriate evaluation of the Quality Teacher Recruitment Program. We look forward to working with CDE, programs, and district partners to address these challenges.

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Appendix A: CDE Quality Teacher Recruitment Grant Interview Guide Summary

APRIL 2014 (YEAR 1)

INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

OMNI Institute is working with the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) on an evaluation of the recently funded Quality Teacher Recruitment Grant Program. This is a two-year evaluation project looking at both implementation and outcomes of teacher preparation programs delivered in Colorado by the Public Education and Business Coalition (PEBC) and Teach For America (TFA). As part of the project, we are conducting interviews with individuals who are knowledgeable about the teacher recruitment, preparation and placement strategies used by these programs. You were identified as someone who has a valuable perspective on their work in this area. Interview conversations will explore the strategies that the programs use to recruit, prepare and place teachers in classrooms in Colorado, including the ways in which the programs identify and select program candidates; prepare and place individual candidates to work effectively in the classroom; and partner with local school districts.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Before the interview, we wanted to share some important information with you about how the information that you share will be used and who to contact if you have questions or concerns.

- You have been selected to participate because you have expertise about the work of PEBC or TFA in Colorado, however, your participation in an interview is completely voluntary.
- We are interested in hearing your honest feedback and opinions, but you are not required to answer any question you don't feel comfortable answering. You may choose at any time not to answer a particular question or to discontinue the interview. You are also welcome to ask questions at any time during the interview.
- Because OMNI Institute is conducting this work on behalf of the Colorado Department of Education, CDE will receive a full copy of all interview notes and recordings at the conclusion of the project.
- For purposes of reporting, all feedback shared during your interview will be incorporated into a summary report for the Colorado Department of Education. Because this project is funded by the Colorado Legislature, the final report will be publicly available. We would like your permission to identify you as an interviewee and potentially include key quotes from you, if

appropriate. We will notify you if we would like to use any direct quotes, and they will only be included with your consent.

Finally, we are hoping to record all interview discussions to ensure that we accurately document what is said. Recordings will not be shared beyond the research team working on this project and the Colorado Department of Education.

Below, we have outlined the overall questions that will be explored through the interview process. Specific questions and follow-up questions will be tailored based on your role relative to the respective program; not all questions will be asked of all interviewees.

TOPIC 1: PROGRAM MODEL OVERALL

- Broadly, what are the core elements and philosophies of the program model? What are the primary goals of the program? How does each program define a successful placement in the long-term?
- What are the strengths of each program model?
- What are the challenges?

TOPIC 2: SCHOOL DISTRICT PARTNERSHIPS

- What factors (e.g., existing support systems, including superintendents, principals, and other teachers) are considered when partnering with individual school districts?
- How do partnership strategies vary regionally or based on geographic location (rural vs. urban)?
- Some of the school districts partnering under the grant are turnaround districts. What influenced the decision to focus on these districts? How does turnaround status influence partnerships with PEBC/TFA?
- What factors do you think make district partnerships more sustainable or institutionalized?

TOPIC 3: TEACHER RECRUITMENT/SELECTION

- What characteristics does the program look for in a teacher candidate? What do you think makes a candidate likely to be successful in the program? And effective in the classroom?
- Please describe the strategies that are used to recruit candidates into the program.
- What do you think are the strengths of the program's recruitment process?
- What challenges, if any, does the program experience around recruitment?
- Tell me about any changes to the recruitment process that have been made as a result of the Quality Teacher Recruitment grant from CDE.
- What differences, if any, have you noticed between the cohort of candidates that are currently being recruited and previous cohorts of candidates?

TOPIC 4: TEACHER PREPARATION PROCESS

- How does the preparation process draw upon existing research/literature about effective teacher preparation strategies?

- How does the preparation process change based on the type of placement? (For example, is there a difference in the preparation based on the school where a candidate will be placed? Or the grade level?)
- How, if at all, will the preparation process change as a result of the grant?

TOPIC 5: TEACHER PLACEMENT PROCESS

- How would you describe the placement process for the program? What strategies are used for placing teachers?
- How do you assess the effectiveness of teachers once placed?

Please feel free to contact Kelly Marzano at the OMNI Institute, at (303) 839-9422 ext. 131 or kmarzano@omni.org if you have any questions.

Appendix B: Final Number of Targeted, Recruited and Placed Teachers, Overall and by Program, as of October 2014

	TFA-Coloardo	PEBC	Total
Target Number	95	65	160
Recruited ⁴	71	57	128
Placed by October 2014	65	55	120
<i>Placed as Teachers of Record</i>	65	8	73
<i>Placed as Residents</i>	NA	47	47
Will Not Be Placed in a Target District ⁵	6	2	8

⁴ The number recruited refers to the number of candidates recruited and admitted into each teacher preparation program for placement in a target district through the Quality Teacher Recruitment Grant Program.

⁵ The number who will not be placed in a target district includes candidates who were placed in a district that is not part of the Quality Teacher Recruitment Grant Program, or who withdrew from the program.