

# TEACH FOR AMERICA: RECRUITING, SELECTING, AND TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION OF EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

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In this Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) proposal, Teach For America (TFA) addresses Absolute Priority 1: Supporting Effective Teachers, specifically, providing teachers from nontraditional preparation and certification routes or pathways to serve in traditionally underserved Local Educational Agencies (LEAs). In addition, this proposal will address three Competitive Preference Priorities (CPPs): 1) Promoting Science, Technology, Engineering, or Math (STEM) Education, With a Particular Focus on Computer Science; 2) Fostering Knowledge and Promoting the Development of Skills That Prepare Students to Be Informed, Thoughtful, and Productive Individuals and Citizens; 3) Spurring Investment in Qualified Opportunity Zones. The three CPPs are addressed in section A1.

## **A. QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN**

**Mission and Impact:** TFA is an externally validated program that recruits, selects, and trains new teachers, whom we call corps members (CMs), and places them in high-need schools. Since 1990, TFA has placed and supported over 62,000 teachers in traditionally underserved schools throughout the country where they have taught over 3 million students. Currently, our alumni of more than 58,000, include 13,700 teachers, 2,500 assistant principals and deans, 1,380 principals, 570 school system leaders, and eight current and former state-level system leaders.

**The Evolving Education Landscape:** Several trends are likely to shape the education sector and TFA's role in it over the next decade. From a macroeconomic perspective, we see growing income inequality and significant barriers to economic mobility. Education is a significant factor here, given that it explains about 30% of intergenerational economic mobility (Butler, 2008). Simultaneously, we continue to see tremendous shifts in technology, expansion of globalization, and the emergence of the gig economy—all of which require a host of interdependent skills. This reality requires students to not only have literacy and numeracy skills, but also to be inquisitive and adaptable, with strong critical thinking skills, and the ability to work across lines of difference.

Furthermore, we are seeing a generational shift in attitudes, motivations interests and needs among Gen Z, our primary recruitment demographic. Research shows that members of Gen Z are focused on their economic security. They are increasingly concerned about taking on debt to pay for college, having seen the average student loan debt more than double from 1996 to 2016 (Student Debt and the Class of 2017, 2018). Gen Z are also generally less idealistic than Millennials and in the recent past have viewed climate change and income and social inequality—not education—as the most pressing issues facing our country. Our early insights on the impacts of COVID-19, however, indicates that their interest in education equity is rising, thus creating an opportunity to bring more teachers into the profession.

In the education sector, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores across racial groups have improved, and we have seen proof points of significant and meaningful change in many communities such as the Rio Grande Valley, Denver, Chicago, Louisiana, Newark, Camden, Tennessee, and others. However, gaps persist in outcomes and opportunity between advantaged and disadvantaged communities. At the same time, the definition of an excellent education is broadening to include the success of the whole student. While social emotional learning (SEL) is being prioritized, teachers are not well trained in it. Finally, there have been advances in the science of teaching and learning. For example, the science of reading has evolved, and new instructional methods have been developed to ensure more students are mastering reading comprehension; however, few teachers have received professional development or instruction that speaks to these advancements.

COVID-19 has exacerbated some of the aforementioned challenges, as well as created new ones. Over the last 30 years, TFA has served thousands of schools and school systems in urban and rural contexts across 36 states, placing CMs in classrooms and training and supporting them to improve their teaching and leadership skills through a continuously improving and innovating

program – squarely anchored in the physical school building. COVID-19 fundamentally changed this dynamic, closing schools and moving learning into a virtual setting. Everyone, including the 450,000 students and 2,400 school communities that our 6,129 CMs serve, has been profoundly affected by this global pandemic; the disruption caused by COVID-19 will have significant reverberations into the foreseeable future. Students who experience inequity are less likely to have access to high-speed internet, devices to access coursework, and the differentiated instruction and individualized supports and resources they need to learn. At the same time, these students are more likely to experience significant environmental stress—whether through family job loss, food insecurity, care-giving challenges—that interferes with their capacity to engage in learning. Consequently, many disadvantaged students have experienced significant learning loss and early research indicates that the average student could begin next year having lost a third of the progress made prior to the pandemic (Goldstein, 2020), further widening the already significant gaps in academic achievement.

In response to the evolving needs of our students, communities, CMs, and prospects and utilizing our three decades of programmatic innovation, TFA requests a \$18 million SEED grant over three years to support:

- **Recruitment and selection:** While COVID-19 has impacted the entire education ecosystem, it has had a particularly devastating impact on underserved communities. As such, providing teachers from nontraditional preparation and certification routes or pathways who have the experiences, skills, and mindsets to lead students to strong academic achievement in traditionally underserved LEAs has never been more important. TFA will recruit and select a corps of 7,500 talented individuals over the next three years to ensure we have a diverse group of top leaders in disadvantaged classrooms across the country.

- **Provide Summer Teacher Training (STT):** TFA has redesigned our traditional pre-service STT, moving from a multi-site university-based residential training to a centralized and standardized virtual training environment. This pre-service training will equip CMs with a core set of knowledge, skills, and mindsets that position them for continued learning in their placement region and provide a foundation for teaching in a virtual and/or hybrid classroom environment, as well as training them to facilitate rigorous, supportive, inclusive classrooms that are accessible to all students.
- **Provide Ongoing Training and Support:** Building on the knowledge and skills acquired during STT, incoming CMs will receive intensive coaching, feedback, and curricular resources during the first 90-days of teaching. After that period, and throughout their two-year commitment, CMs will engage in ongoing support and professional development individually, in grade-level and content-based small groups, and in large groups across the cohort within their region. As we work to innovate and meet the evolving needs of our CMs, these new supports will provide the opportunity to build their foundational teaching approach and refine their practice.
- **Increase access to effective STEM teachers:** TFA places a focus on STEM by fielding a corps in which nearly one-third is trained to teach math and science. We will further foster access to computer science (CS) opportunities in low-income schools by training all CMs to integrate computational thinking (CT) into instruction in all grades and subjects.
- **Develop SEL Skills in CMs and Students:** To build a strong foundation for teaching and learning, TFA will prepare CMs to develop social emotional skills in two ways: 1) our STT will include explicit learning experiences focused on SEL and prepare teachers to integrate skills and knowledge into curriculum in the fall; 2) During their ongoing support and training, CMs will learn how to promote their students' social-emotional health through

access to emotional well-being trainings, as well as a student SEL assessments.

- **Spurring Investment in Qualified Opportunity Zones (QOZs):** TFA is the nation’s largest producer of teachers for high-need schools. All 50 TFA regions place in QOZs. In total, 87% of our corps will teach in 1,940 QOZs.

## **A1. AN EXCEPTIONAL APPROACH TO THE PRIORITIES**

### **Absolute Priority 1: Supporting Effective Teachers through Nontraditional Preparation Pathways**

TFA’s approach to providing high-need LEAs with effective teachers through a nontraditional preparation pathway is truly exceptional because of its proven effectiveness, national reach, and emphasis on diversity, selectivity, and the development of long-term educational leaders.

Proven Model. Six studies that meet the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards demonstrate that teachers supported by TFA’s model of preparation and development improve student achievement. Three studies meet WWC standards without reservations, (Clark, et al., 2013; Clark, et al., 2017; Decker, Mayer, & Glazerman, 2004) and the remaining three meet WWC standards with reservations (Henry, et al., 2014; Turner, Goodman, Adachi, Brite, & Decker, 2012; Xu, Hannaway, & Taylor, 2011). Taken together, these studies meet the Department’s highest standard of strong evidence, exceeding the SEED competition’s moderate evidence bar. This means that supporting studies show that the statistically significant impact of TFA’s model persists across various populations in multiple states. We discuss these supporting studies in Section B1.

National Reach. As a national non-profit, our infrastructure leverages national staff to develop common principles, strategies, and programming to enable effective teaching, which is then customized in its application by on-the-ground regional staff across various local contexts. This unique operating model allows TFA to possess broad national reach, rather than just serving one or two LEAs or a few grade levels/subject areas. A SEED grant would allow us to field a corps of

7,500 new teachers to teach all grades and subjects in high-need schools, serving a mix of rural and urban communities in 50 regions in 36 states and Washington, DC. Given the studies cited above, our work in just two years could potentially result in providing over 280,000 students across the country with an effective teacher. As a result, given the scope of our programming, throughout this narrative we describe the common operating principles of our model.

Diversity. We place a high priority on fielding a diverse corps. Research demonstrates that fostering educator diversity, increasing the number of teachers who share their students' racial and economic backgrounds, has clear benefits, including improved student achievement (Egalite, Kisida, & Winters, 2015). Yet, in 2019, only 18% of the current teacher workforce identified as people of color (POC). By contrast, 51% of TFA's corps identifies as POC, 43% received Pell Grants as undergraduates (a proxy for being from a low-income background), and 34% are the first in their family to attend college. Our corps is nearly three times as racially diverse as traditional teacher preparation programs, with 19% identifying as African American, 15% Latino, and 8% Asian American and Pacific Islander (compared to 6%, 4%, and 2%, respectively, at colleges of education) (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), 2013).

Selectivity. Our model includes a rigorous selection process that allows us to identify talented candidates who are strong leaders in their communities and best positioned to be effective teachers. For 30 years, TFA has studied our program participants with the greatest success in advancing student achievement and identified a set of selection criteria based on qualities found to distinguish successful teaching in low-income communities. TFA's selection model roots each admittance decision in what we know about the likelihood of success based on past CMs' performance on each selection criteria. In 2019, we admitted 12% of applicants from 640 colleges and universities. Their average undergraduate GPA was 3.49, and 98% reported having prior leadership experience.

We ground our selection strategy in data-driven decision making. To that end, independent

studies have validated TFA’s selection model, demonstrating that it successfully identifies teachers who will have a positive impact on student achievement, even in their first year of teaching (Dobbie, 2011) (Bastian, 2013). These findings are especially significant in light of the limited evidence on the factors that predict teacher effectiveness. Using the data and research we have compiled over the last three decades, in 2018, we began a multi-year research arc to innovate and involve our selection model in response to mindsets shift among Gen Z.

### **Our Nontraditional Approach**

TFA’s exceptional model of nontraditional preparation is grounded in three core strategies:

- 1) *Find promising leaders*: We recruit and select outstanding and diverse leaders with evidence of the values and leadership necessary to transform high-need classrooms.
- 2) *Positioning CMs To Increase Student Academic and Social Emotional Achievement*: We put CMs on the path to becoming effective teachers through intensive pre-service and ongoing training. CMs begin to develop the skills and mindsets necessary to achieve dramatic gains in high-need classrooms.
- 3) *Foster and strengthen CM effectiveness through ongoing support and development*: We provide rigorous, intensive, and ongoing training and development to promote continuous improvement, enabling effective instruction and strong student outcomes.

#### **1. Find Promising Leaders**

**Recruitment:** In order to cultivate a diverse pool of high-quality candidates positioned to achieve significant results with students in high-need classrooms, we actively seek out top student leaders and professionals from all majors and fields. As we look ahead, we will recruit a new generation of leaders, amidst an economy and education landscape heavily impacted by COVID-19, as well a teacher labor market in significant flux.

We are making substantial changes to our recruiting strategy based on insights about the current

generation of TFA prospects, Gen Z, and how they interact with potential employers. As a result of the pandemic, Gen Z has a growing appreciation for the importance of educational equity and what it has revealed about underlying inequities and the centrality of school in kids' lives. This trend is a very recent reversal of a previous multi-year trend of waning interest in education, and thus represents an opportunity for TFA to capture the energy and imagination of the rising generation. Further insights suggest that Gen Z interacts with organizations in different ways from prior cohorts; in addition to firsthand accounts, they want firsthand, immersive experiences to give them a real sense of the work and culture of the organization. Furthermore, the employer engagement timeline has expanded and occurs earlier in a student's college experience.

In response to these insights, we will shift key aspects of our recruitment model. We are dedicating a staff of 192 full-time employees across 205 college campuses to recruit for five application deadlines throughout the year. Our comprehensive recruitment model focuses on engaging students early in their college careers and mobilizing our broad and diverse base of future and current CMs and alumni to build a positive narrative about the potential of the children we teach, their academic outcomes, and the life-long leadership roles our alumni play in eradicating inequities in the system. To successfully recruit a new cohort of teachers, we will shift our internal practices in the following ways:

Prospect Engagement Strategy: For over 15 years, we staffed a team of frontline recruiters to conduct one-on-one meetings with promising prospects. Now, we are shifting away from an individual meeting strategy to a network strategy with teams of recruiters working together toward collective portfolio goals versus individual portfolio goals. Each campus team of recruiters will include members working in tandem to engage prospects in different ways. For example, one recruiter on a campus will focus on early engagement and will share information on our mission, the corps experience, and the impact of our work on students. After those initial meetings, that recruiter

will pass the prospect on to another recruiter who is focused on engaging the prospect in events and experiences, such as classroom observations or a panel discussion on education equity. This structure will create a continuum of engagement experiences for prospects throughout their college career and enable them to participate in experiences that will foster knowledge acquisition about and investment in entering the field of teaching.

Underclassmen Recruiters: Given the importance of engaging college students as early as their first year, we will add dedicated underclassmen recruiters, who will focus on building awareness of educational inequity through compelling events and programming. This, coupled with how Gen Z is seeing the pandemic affect students, we expect to see more top leaders at campuses conclude that educational inequity is one of the most pressing issues of their generation and pursue pathways to classroom teaching after graduation, rather than careers in the for-profit sector or other social sectors.

Engaging Influencers: We seek to align our core cultivation practices with the ways in which Gen Z wants to be recruited. To that end, we focus on leveraging our most positive and proximate voices to advocate on behalf of TFA. Prospects overwhelmingly report that they want authenticity from TFA and the experience. In order to provide authentic experiences, we engage the following individuals: 1. Ambassadors (i.e., students who have been accepted into TFA or plan to apply for TFA); 2) current CMs and alumni; 3) Faculty and staff supporters; and 4) Parents—COVID-19 has increased the number of students living at home with their families, and parents are a key influencer in their child’s career decision-making.

To ensure our team is prepared to recruit the next generation of education leaders, this summer we will conduct 6 weeks of virtual training for recruiters, specifically focused on training the team on our FY21 strategy. This initial training focuses on the foundations of strong recruitment: 1) cultivating a deep understanding of TFA’s organizational mission, vision, and values (see Appendix

G); 2) communicating them in a compelling way to bring prospects to the table; and 3) inspiring these prospects to apply to TFA. Critical to our ability to foster a diverse applicant pool and ultimately, a diverse corps, is culturally competent recruiting, which we integrate into all of our training. For example, we provide training on historical racism and classism and how it has influenced the communities we serve, and we prepare our recruiters to speak about these inequities when sharing about our mission and work. Throughout the recruitment season, we build on these foundational skills with a dedicated training scope and sequence.

***Selection:*** TFA dedicates significant resources to develop a unique and rigorous process for selecting those best positioned to achieve classroom impact and we continuously examine our model to ensure that we select the strongest applicants who will lead our students to make academic, social, and emotional gains.

We are focusing on who we aim to admit, our selector force, and our selection process itself, specifically the actions and experiences applicants participate in when applying to TFA. The world and our applicants have changed over the last twenty years; evolving our selection model allows TFA an opportunity to redesign an admissions process for a new generation of applicants. Additionally, in our ever-changing world, we need a model and process that can adjust as we learn, allowing us to design content and tech systems that support quick changes and additions to our model, while also integrating ongoing research, insights, and expertise from CMs, staff, alumni, and external partners. While our current model and process has selected high impact CMs and alumni, our new strategy will allow us to reconsider how we currently measure applicant attributes, as well as what attributes are being measured, and how this aligns to our organizational mission, vision, and values.

Over the cycle of this SEED grant, TFA will change our selection processes in the following ways:

Selection Model: Working with experts from academia, education, and business, we developed a new set of selection competencies. These criteria demonstrate an evolution from our previous selection criteria, listed in Exhibit 1, and are based on qualities found to distinguish successful teaching and leadership in low-income communities. These qualities include the skills, mindsets and values our model is designed to select for in our CMs.

**Exhibit 1. TFA Admissions Selection Criteria 2000 – 2020**

<b>Core Competencies</b>
Demonstrated leadership and achievement in academic, professional, or extracurricular settings
Perseverance in the face of challenges and long-term commitment to reaching goals
Organizational ability: planning well, meeting deadlines, and working efficiently
Ability to influence and motivate others
Respect for individuals’ diverse experiences, including low-income students and families
Understanding of TFA’s vision and deep belief in the potential of all kids

In our new model, we will evaluate our candidates on four competencies:

- **Learning:** We define Learning as possessing an ability and desire to learn from both people and experiences, particularly challenging experiences, and an ability and desire to access resources and feedback to continuously improve. Learning is most aligned to Perseverance in our current model - whether or not an applicant increases or decreases effort in the face of challenge. Our research shows, however, that Learning is much more than effort. The insights we gathered from leaders in the field of education, our regional executive directors (EDs), CMs, and alumni show that constant and continuous learning distinguished their most impactful CMs and that learning was a top skill leveraged throughout their careers in education.
- **Achievement:** We define achievement as the ability to set visions beyond the status quo and a track record of achieving those visions. Integral to achievement is leadership, which we value at both the collective and individual level. Our current Leadership competency is

predictive of CM outcomes in the classroom. Given this, we are retaining many aspects of this competency. We are, however, expanding this competency to be more robust, allowing us to understand a candidate's vision for their own future achievement.

The insights we gathered from leaders in the field of education, including a research partnership with Southern Methodist University, as well as data from other external researchers, as well as insights from our network, highlighted that past achievement is often the strongest predictor of future achievement.

- **People:** We define People as a desire and an ability to work in a broad and diverse coalition, so that an individual is meaningfully contributing to impact. Historically, we have measured Influencing and Motivating and Building Relationships in Diverse Settings. We currently measure Communication and Presence and Relationship Building. This new competency builds on the strongest aspects of those previous ones and expands to include a deeper understanding of a candidate's ability to meaningfully build inclusive relationships.

The insights we gathered from leaders in the field of education, and our network of staff, CMs, and alumni, showed that CMs must have a desire to work with others who do not share their opinions, experiences, and values. Additionally, the most impactful CMs were able to work well within a system while simultaneously identifying its flaws. When asked about their "signature strength," our alumni systems-change leaders all reflected on at least one skill related to people. In some cases, they noted an exceptional ability to communicate complex topics in a simple manner.

- **Fit:** We define Fit as a deep belief in kids and families in low-income communities. Our current Fit competency measures a candidate's knowledge of our mission, as well as prior experience in a low-income community. This competency will expand to ask candidates to reflect on how they see themselves making an impact and what their experience (or lack of

experience) in a low-income community means for their work as a CM.

Selectors: Throughout TFA's history, we have maintained a similar approach to determining who comprises our selector force despite several changes in our environment. Historically, our approach was the majority of TFA staff participated in selection, and this worked well with our staff size and make-up, as the majority of our staff were TFA alumni. As our staff has grown and teams evolved to have greater specialization, there is evidence that this approach needs to change. Over the course of a decade, our selector force has increased by roughly 1,000 selectors, and is made up of staff with greater variation in previous experiences, current job responsibilities, and skills.

Our research indicates that our interviewers have a significant impact on our applicants and our current interview force, while professional, doesn't consistently inspire candidates. In response to the research, the changes in both the external environment of applicant's needs and our internal staff profile, we are evolving our applicant selector force from over 1,000 highly trained staff members who interview a small number of candidates annually, to about 300 staff interviewers who interview more candidates, more frequently, up to 10 days of interviews per year. Other changes to our selector force include:

Selectors' Charge: Our research yielded two major insights that informed this decision: 1) selection is one of the most influential experiences in a prospect's journey to the classroom and many applicants have told us their selector deeply influenced their perception of TFA and their level of inspiration and motivation to join the corps; 2) Gen Z views things through multiple lenses; they want to interact with multiple people within TFA. Their ideal interview process is divided equally between understanding TFA and assessing the corps commitment opportunity and the opportunity to demonstrate their skills, values, and worth. As a result, our selectors who were traditionally charged to make evidence based, equitable decisions are now also charged with being stewards to inspire and motivate our most competitive applicants to join the corps.

Selection Process: As we think about needs of our top prospects, we are considering the changes we need to make to our selection processes. Currently, our applicant experience is as follows:

Application: The online application allows applicants to speak to their accomplishments, experiences, and interest in TFA. They complete a 300-word written response to a prompt; upload a resume; and share details about their academic and/or professional experiences.

Pre-interview Activity: The pre-interview activity consists of multiple short-answer questions.

Final Interview: Each applicant participates in three experiences: sample teaching lesson; personal interview, which includes a case study or a role play; and finally, a question and answer session where the applicant is able to get their questions asked.

Over the next two years, we will pilot applicant experiences that are designed to show applicants their unique value add to TFA, in direct alignment with what Gen Z is looking for in the applicant process. For example, we are looking to restructure our interview day schedule to reduce time applicants spend waiting and increase the time available to applicants to have conversations with their interviewers. In addition, TFA alumni will participate in our interview days to share their experience with applicants and motivate them to commit to the program.

## **2. Positioning CMs To Increase Student Academic and Social Emotional Achievement**

After they are selected for the corps, but before they enter the classroom, all CMs must complete a standardized 4 ½ week intensive and outcomes-oriented STT program that will provide the foundation for new teachers to thrive and impact change as future educators and leaders. After their summer training, CMs move to their placement regions and, with the support of regional and national staff, participate in professional development opportunities, small-group content and grade-level based professional development, as well as individual feedback cycles with teacher coaches.

**STT:** In previous years, we ran multiple STTs developed and executed by national or regional teams, which led to variability in CMs' experiences. Over the last year, as part of TFA's

organization-wide strategic planning process, we spent significant time understanding the CM experience, particularly the recruitment and training experience. Through that process, emerged a desire to decrease the variability that our CMs experience. Our multi-year plan to reduce this variation accelerated significantly due to COVID-19. Specifically, in summer 2020, we will launch one virtual STT. This training will be attended by all 2,800 incoming CMs and will focus on four domains: 1) Instruction; 2) Learning Environment; 3) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; 4) Reflection. Section A2 describes the nature of our STT in greater of detail.

### **3. Foster and strengthen CM effectiveness through ongoing support and development**

***Ongoing Training and Support:*** Our vision for teacher preparation does not end with STT—our complete model of nontraditional teacher preparation requires a two-year continuum of support and development, of which STT, while critical, is only the beginning. Thus, while STT places CMs on the path toward effective teaching in disadvantaged communities, TFA also provides CMs with ongoing training and support that is grounded in local contexts throughout their two years in the classroom. The ongoing support provided by TFA occurs alongside professional development hosted by LEAs and schools.

In response to the needs of the moment, and our growing understanding of the key leverage points in a teacher’s development, we have made a significant change to our teacher support model, which is designed to build skills, knowledge, and confidence in teaching:

First 90-days training and support: For the first 90 days of their teaching experience, CMs will engage in a highly interactive, collaborative, and structured cycle of development, training, and support during one of the most critical windows in a new teacher's journey. A major component of the first 90-days support is intensive in-person and/or virtual thrice weekly real-time coaching, where CMs are observed by a master teacher, teacher coach, or other educational expert and provided feedback on their emerging teaching practice.

Post 90-days training and support: After the first 90-days, ongoing supports for the rest of the school year continue and remain grounded in fostering classroom effectiveness in the first year of teaching. The ongoing support provided after the first quarter of the school year also broadens to include a focus on developing leadership skills and practices within the context of the classroom in the second year and beyond.

In addition to internal supports to foster effective instruction, we also work with external partners to complete the full continuum of training. Through partnerships with institutions of higher education, LEAs, states, and other organizations, CMs in all of our regions participate in state-approved teacher preparation programs, which allows CMs to obtain the necessary coursework and other prerequisite training, in tandem with TFA’s internal training and support, to qualify for full state teaching licensure (see Appendix H for a list of university partnerships). Section A2 describes the nature of our ongoing training and support in greater of detail.

**Competitive Preference Priority: Promoting STEM Education, With a Particular Focus on CS**

Research demonstrates that TFA teachers particularly excel in math and science instruction. Based on existing experimental and quasi-experimental studies, a WWC intervention report found that our model produces teachers who have “positive effects on mathematics achievement and potentially positive effects on science achievement” (Mathematica Policy Research, 2016). In addition, TFA strives to meet the teacher shortage needs for all of our various LEA and school partners, which is often in STEM. As a result, we recruit and prepare a significant number of CMs for math and science placements. Through the recruitment process, our recruitment team specifically cultivates STEM prospects, attends conferences and forums for undergraduate STEM majors and STEM professionals, and measures progress against STEM-specific recruitment targets. It is our goal to recruit and prepare nearly one-third of our corps, over two years, to teach STEM subjects, and within that group, more than 80% of them will be individuals who are traditionally

underrepresented in STEM.

Secondary Mathematics and Science As over half of TFA's corps teaches in a secondary setting, with 26% teaching STEM, we place a particular focus on supporting the growth and development of this cohort. Beginning at STT, CMs receive content-focused, researched-aligned support. In these sessions, CMs learn: 1) Common Core math and Next-Gen science content standards, processes, and structures; 2) TFA's Visions for Learning in math and science (see Appendix I) and how it will lead to student outcomes; and 3) pedagogical approaches to teaching math and science. In addition, CMs will build their own vision for their content area to then use in their planning and instructional activities in the fall. To build on the learnings of summer training, this cohort receives STEM-specific ongoing support and training throughout the year, which is inclusive of real-time classroom coaching and ongoing coaching, as well as small group, content-based professional development sessions throughout the year. Finally, TFA's national specialist team, comprised of experts in STEM education, provide ongoing support by creating resources and trainings to support the teaching practices and growth of this cohort of teachers.

Computer Science and Computational Thinking TFA also takes a leadership role in the area of CS. TFA's goal is to expand access to CS by training CMs on how to integrate computational thinking (CT) into instruction in all grades and subjects. Computational thinking is a set of overlapping problem-solving skills, which supports students in thinking about CS. By expanding access to CS by training CMs in CT, we will systematically provide more students with the skills and mindsets to participate and succeed in CS pathways.

In order to increase the number of students from low-income communities taking and succeeding in CS courses in high school and pursuing CS beyond high school, we need to increase the number of CT learning opportunities available and address the barriers that discourage underrepresented students from continued participation (Google Inc. & Gallup Inc., 2016). By

continually exposing CMs to meaningful CT learning experiences and professional development—first, at STTe, and then, over the duration of their first two years in the classroom, we will help them: 1) understand the value of CT mindsets, knowledge, and skills and 2) commit to introducing/integrating CT within their classroom instruction (Liu, Wilson, Hemmenway, Xu, & Lin, 2015). To that end, we will implement the following strategies as part of this approach:

STT Learning Experiences. As part of the STT curriculum, we will implement CT learning experiences for all CMs that focus on: 1) cultivating mindsets and orientations towards CT and its potential impact on students and 2) exposing CMs to concrete practices and resources for incorporating CT across all grades and subjects.

Online Learning Modules and Regional Resources. We will leverage regional staff by providing them with a scope and sequence of CT learning modules and instructional resources to embed into their ongoing professional development of CMs.

***Competitive Preference Priority: Fostering Knowledge and Promoting the Development of Skills That Prepare Students to Be Informed, Thoughtful, and Productive Individuals and Citizens***

Teachers play a critical role in the social and emotional development of children and research demonstrates that building the skills and knowledge to support emotional well-being and thriving among teachers can provide numerous benefits for students including modeling strategies to manage stress, build relationships, overcome obstacles, and problem solve.

TFA’s organizational strategy calls for deeper investment in social emotional learning (SEL), as a means to supporting our CMs in their leadership journeys and preparing students for healthy, fulfilling lives. A challenge we face is that the field is crowded with program developers and assessment vendors, and our regions don’t have the resources to navigate and test these offerings to identify what works. To address this challenge, TFA has developed a multi-year SEL learning agenda (See Appendix J) and will provide SEL training to CMs at summer training, as well

as implement a number of pilot tests to identify assessments and programs that support our CMs and their students. These pilots focus on supporting teachers' SEL and their understanding and support of students' well-being.

Summer Training SEL Training: Our virtual STT will include explicit learning experiences focused on SEL. The summer training SEL practicum is a collection of 3 1-hr asynchronous modules. The learning is grounded in the work and research of The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). CASEL is focused on the work of bringing together research, practice, and policy to support PK-12th grade SEL. The full arc of STT SEL training will lead to the following outcomes: 1) CMs will be able to define SEL and explain why schools and classrooms should be grounded in SEL practices; 2) CMs will engage with and see examples of three ways of doing so: classroom climate, integration of SEL and instruction, and explicit SEL instruction; and 3) CMs will reflect on their own practice with SEL and on how they will incorporate their SEL learning into their lesson plans.

Yale Partnership (emotional regulation): TFA is partnering with the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence to pilot a large-scale program focused on improving CMs' emotional well-being. Specifically, YCEI will develop and deliver a one-year emotion regulation training program comprised of four 90-minute web-based live and interactive lessons given by Dr. Marc Brackett, YCEI director throughout the 2020/21 school year. The training will include the teaching of evidence-based emotion regulation strategies that can promote greater stress management and well-being. Incoming CMs from a random sample of half of our regions will receive the program, and CMs from the remaining regions will not. A pre-assessment (survey of stress, emotional regulation, etc.) will be given to CMs prior to the STT training and four assessments will be administered throughout the year. This program and study design will: 1) provide frequent information about well-being of CMs which will be shared with regional and national teams to inform programming;

2) allow us to understand the impact of this program on our CMs' well-being and share what we have learned with the field through peer-reviewed research; 3) demonstrate both internally and externally a large, concrete investment in the well-being of our educators so they can attend to the well-being of their students; and 4) be sustainable if it is effective

TRIPOD (teacher pulse survey): In partnership with Tripod, TFA will work to ensure that all students are emotionally supported in CMs' classrooms. Tripod's Beginning Teacher Pulse Surveys cover a standard set of domains that are intended to reflect core skills, behaviors, and challenges of beginning teachers. The surveys are designed to be given in small doses at regular intervals throughout the first year of teaching. This allows for tracking trends overtime and for responses to lead to real-time support of teachers. The core beginning teacher survey domains are: 1) classroom management; 2) perceived areas of needed assistance; 3) stress 4) school climate; 5) time management; 6) professional growth; 7) growth orientation.

KlickEngage (student pulse survey): In partnership with KlickEngage, TFA will pilot a daily student pulse survey that amplifies the voices of students and promotes social-emotional well-being. Students of the CMs in the pilot will begin their day by reporting their emotions through a 5-question survey. CMs will receive a real-time report so they can track trends, as well as be proactive about supporting student needs. CMs will also receive tailored training and tools they can use to help students get back to their cognitive baseline. This pilot will be evaluated using qualitative methods (e.g., interviews with CMs regarding their perceptions of usability, value, and impact).

### **Spurring Investment in Qualified Opportunity Zones**

TFA's belief that too many children in America are denied access to an excellent education drives our placement strategy to target high need, economically distressed communities across the country. As QOZs also focus on economically distressed regions, there is alignment between where we place and QOZs. TFA will recruit, select, and place over 80% of our teachers in 1,940 QOZs across 36

states in 2020, 2021, and 2022. To ensure our teachers increase the academic and social emotional outcomes of their students, we will provide them with an arc of training and support inclusive of pre-service summer training and ongoing support in the classroom. See Appendix K for the census tract number of the COZ(s) in which TFA proposes to provide services.

## **A2. SUFFICIENT QUALITY, INTENSITY, AND DURATION OF TRAINING**

Our nontraditional preparation model includes training that is of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration. Based on over three decades of innovations and pilots at STTs and in regions, we have developed a teaching as leadership framework (see Appendix L), which is a common set of principles to foster effective teaching, that drives summer training and ongoing support and development in all regions. These principles are:

1. Effective teachers recognize that building relationships with: students; colleagues; parents/guardians; and other adults with a strong influence on students is essential for student learning. This includes working to understand how their identity and experiences influence their teaching.
2. Effective teachers set clear, specific, and measurable visions and goals for student academic and personal learning that is informed by state standards and in partnership with students and families.
3. Effective teachers develop the pedagogical knowledge and skills--both content-specific and cross-content, including planning, executing, and managing the learning environment--to lead classrooms toward their vision of student learning.
4. Effective teachers practice continuous learning and improvement, developing a commitment and skill to constantly reflect on/analyze outcomes and refine their approach.

Our goal is to provide a connected and aligned continuum of supports driven by these principles from the day CMs matriculate into the corps through their first two years of teaching.

## **Training Point of and Key Structural and Content Elements**

As we develop and implement a standardized, centralized pre-service STT for the future, in an accelerated context due to COVID-19, we are called upon to reflect on our practices over the last 30 years and review best practices within the field. We know that in this unprecedented time of virtual learning and social distancing, it will not be possible to do things as we have traditionally done them and that communities need new leaders capable of solving emerging and complex problems. At the same time, research shows that many of the same orientations and skills remain relevant to the challenge at hand. Internally, our point of view on STT training has grown out of smaller scale pilots at previous STTs where we tested alternative approaches to CM development, much of it supported by prior SEED grants. These initiatives provided us with emerging insights about how to design our training to foster in CMs a deeper understanding and internalization of how to deliver effective, rigorous instruction. Externally, we consulted with schools of education, experts in the field of virtual learning and education, as well as alumni leaders. A subset of those consulted joined our advisory council to provide ongoing feedback and thought partnership (see Appendix M for a list of our STT advisory council). Internally, our program team, comprised of former teachers and school leaders, conducted a review of best in class practices to source ideas and insights from, which includes: Universal Design for Learning Framework (CAST, 2018), CASEL SEL resources (CASEL, 2020), Gloria Ladson-Billing's (Ladson-Billings, *But That's Just Good Teaching! The Case for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy*, 1995) work on CRP, and other such resources.

As part of our efforts to offer an outstanding and research-based program to CMs, our training point of view is also informed by those partnering directly with us to support develop and implement our first virtual, standardized STT. Our partnerships include:

The Teaching Channel is an online learning management system where CMs will access their asynchronous learning experiences and any materials during synchronous, facilitator-led

experiences. CMs will also upload assignments and performance tasks for their end of summer portfolio to the Teaching Channel. The technology also has the functionality to upload video footage and for teachers or coaches to annotate for different strategies, offer feedback, or grade on a rubric.

The Barksdale Reading is a national leader in evidence-based literacy instruction, will provide pre-literacy and reading skills training and will provide four 2-hour asynchronous modules on the “Science of Reading,” a certification requirement in many of our regions. These modules will also include on-demand office-hour support from Reading League experts. For a full list of our STT partnerships, please see Appendix N.

*Approach to CM Development: STT in 2021 and 2022*

In evolving the design of our STT, we sought to respond to our understanding of the needs of users across our system, including CMs, the principals and administrators of the schools with whom we partner, and the students and families within those communities.

Our STT training will build the skills and knowledge for CMs to lead rigorous, supportive, and inclusive classrooms in the following ways: 1) equip CMs with a core set of knowledge, skills, and mindsets that introduce the foundations to facilitating rigorous, supportive, inclusive classrooms; 2) engage in reflection on the alignment between their values, decisions, actions, and impact; 3) cultivate self-awareness and community through a shared commitment to TFA’s foundations; 4) build supportive relationships within the broader TFA network. To concentrate our STT, each week has a focus: 1) week 1— building the foundation; 2) week 2— contextualizing the work 3) week 3— sharpening our skills; and 4) week 4— building our leadership. We operationalize our STT through four:

Instruction: Develop a rigorous vision for student learning and instructional design anchored in culturally relevant pedagogy.

Learning Environment: Develop a vision and aligned practices for creating an inclusive learning environment, informed by knowledge of child development, trauma-informed practice, and social-emotional learning.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Build awareness and skill in relationship-building, self-awareness, and systems-level thinking that are required to work toward educational equity as a teacher-leader.

Reflection: Regularly reflect on the alignment between values, decisions, actions, and impact. Realign behaviors, decisions, and actions based on lessons learned (see appendix O for more details on the domains, outcomes, assessment, and measures of success)

Driven by content developed along each of the learning domains, CMs will engage in a series of experiences over their 4 ½ weeks, which will prepare them to teach. At the foundation of our summer training are the following learning structures and content:

Learning Cycles: Throughout the summer, CMs will engage in seven learning cycles consisting of asynchronous foundational knowledge-building, synchronous practice and skill-building, and asynchronous reflection. Each week they will engage in roughly two learning cycles, led by learning community members. CMs will split their time 60/40 between synchronous and asynchronous learning, with synchronous learning occurring within a six-hour block each weekday.

Learning cycles are designed to be a consistent, predictable structure that is grounded in the four domains, providing CMs with a conceptual understanding of foundation, core practices and vision for content while moving them toward readiness for classroom implementation. Throughout the summer, cycles are structured so CMs have flexible time to learn foundational content and plan for synchronous time with peers and staff members and have time and space for collaborative planning and practice. There are two types of sessions embedded within learning cycles — content,

which all CMs receive and content that is subject and grade level based. See Appendix P for an example of learning cycle plan.

As a result of COVID-19, student engagement during STT will be virtually embedded throughout these cycles, CMs will tutor students and engage with parents. Through a partnership with Springboard Collaborative, CMs will individually and in small groups tutor students. This will include establishing a baseline and growth goal for each student. Once a week, CMs will meet with both students and parents to share accountability for academic goals and to coach parents on how to support meeting growth goals at home. In addition to learning to set growth goals and work towards them, CMs will also learn to establish meaningful relationships with both parents and students. Throughout these sessions, CMs will be coached by Springboard Learning Accelerators — education experts, former teachers, and former school leaders to support in goal setting, strategies for meeting those goals, and student and parent engagement.

CM Performance Tasks and Portfolio: In order to track learning, growth, and progress, there are performance tasks components at the end of each cycle. A performance task is any learning activity or assessment to demonstrate CM knowledge, understanding and proficiency. Performance tasks yield a tangible product and/or performance that serves as evidence of learning such as: 1) CM designed lesson plans, which incorporate best practices developed over the course of the summer; 2) practice videos of CMs modeling the skills they have built; and 3) a learning environment toolkit and classroom plan. As a result of this structure, CMs will develop a portfolio across all four domains that reflects the culmination of their learning across STT.

The CM portfolio is the primary way we will understand the degree to which CMs have demonstrated proficiency on our end of summer outcomes and represents the culmination of CM learning through STT. It can also serve as a diagnostic that lays a foundation for a CMs continued learning in their home region. This approach to portfolio creation and assessment aligns with what

we know about Gen Z and what we have heard directly from our incoming CMs: they want to have clarity about what is expected of them, understand how they are doing against this bar, and be clear on their level of preparedness.

Learning communities: Learning communities are the foundational grouping during STT, where CMs are grouped with approximately 50 other CMs based on time zone, content area, and placement region. Staff are attached to each group and will directly support learning to ensure each group is working as team to build foundational skills necessary to flexibly lead students toward academic and personal growth. Staff roles include:

- Learning Community Chair (LCC): The head of each learning community, the LCC stewards learning community's culture and development.
- Leadership Coach (Coach): Coaches will work alongside CMs, guiding them in reflection and helping them make sense of content and sessions.
- Operations Manager (OM): The OM will equip CMs with the information and resources to navigate the STT experience and will often be the first stop for questions or logistical needs.
- Content Facilitator (CF): Learning communities will be united around a common content, and the CF is the subject matter expert on that content. They will guide CMs through content-based asynchronous and synchronous learning.
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusiveness Facilitator (DEIF): The DEIF leads learning spaces on educational inequity with a critical reflection on identity to inform CMs' approach and commitment to leading an equitable and inclusive classroom.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Seminars: The purpose of DEI development is to engender in CMs the knowledge, skills, mindsets and convictions that lead to stronger outcomes for all students. TFA uniquely makes DEI a central focus across all our pre-service training components and in ongoing support and development of CMs. To that end, STT will include 26 hours of

development for CMs focused on DEI and its intersections with classroom leadership. The development is grouped into cycles where CMs engage in a two-hour synchronous seminar led by a DEI facilitator, followed by 90 minutes of asynchronous work to reflect on their leadership development and prepare for the next seminar. This represents a fundamental shift in our DEI programming where CMs can build knowledge and foundational understanding through independent work and reflection prior to engaging in synchronous dialogue with others. The content curated for STT builds upon the previous STT curriculum, prompts CMs to consider concrete actions they can take in their classrooms and serves to more deeply integrate DEI as part of leadership development and cycles of reflection. This domain of learning grounds itself in TFA's commitment to DEI, our foundations, and our Theory of Leadership (see Appendices J and U).

**Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP):** The foundation of STT work is based on CRP – a pedagogical framework that requires teachers to: 1) hold high, rigorous and transparent academic expectations; 2) meet students where they are and scaffold their knowledge by building on their cultural and linguistic practices; 3) understand their own cultural background and actively learn about those of their students; and 4) view education as one pathway toward change by actively developing their own socio-political consciousness and that of their students (Ladson-Billings, 1995). This framework informed the choices we made about CM and student curriculum such as: selection of which Core Practices, drawing primarily on research from the Teacher Education by Design (TEDD) project and the Core Practice Consortium (The University of Washington's College of Education, 2014; Core Practice, 2017), to prioritize within the CM development sequence and the design of DEI Sessions.

#### *Approach to CM Development: Ongoing Training and Support*

As CMs transition to their placement region and to teaching, they will engage in three main arcs of training and development, which will include:

First 90-days training and support: To bridge their time between summer STT and their move to their placement region, we will provide CMs with the capabilities to virtually teach kids, align with content experts, receive regular feedback, and tap into our vast alumni network through centralized platforms. This is an entirely new approach to the first 90 days of a CMs' experience and one that we believe will have long-lasting impact on their effectiveness and our programmatic work. It includes:

- Intensive coaching: Given COVID-19, most CMs will have very limited teaching experience prior to the first day of school, therefore we will ensure that CMs have rapid and regular coaching and feedback cycles on their teaching three times a week, which will utilize TFA's full network of CMs, alumni, partners, and school leaders. Coaching will come in several forms:
  - Real-time coaching: An experienced teacher or coach is in the classroom with a CM while they deliver instruction. They give immediate feedback to the teacher in real-time.
  - Virtual coaching: CMs will have the capabilities to record their classroom teaching and upload them daily to a technology platform where a coach can then annotate the classroom teaching video with feedback. The use of technology allows us to expand beyond our full-time coaching staff to include our full network of partners, education experts, and alumni.
  - Professional Learning Communities: Building on STT, we will continue to utilize professional learning communities amongst CMs to facilitate group coaching. CMs will participate via video and together they will review a video of a colleague's classroom, give feedback, learn, and iterate on strategies that will lead to student success.

After the first thirty days of intensive coaching, we will assess CMs' ability to meet developmental milestones and use that to differentiate ongoing coaching supports for our CMs, providing either more intensive or at least monthly coaching depending on CM need. In addition to coaching, CMs ongoing professional development will include two new innovative supports:

- **Universal Access to and Feedback on Instructional Materials.** Given the size of TFA's network, including both veteran teachers, curriculum developers, and thought leaders in the field of instructional design, all CMs will have virtual access to curricular resources in their content areas. This will include year-long asynchronous and synchronous components such as:
  - **Virtual Resource Bank:** CMs will have unlimited online access to curated resources by content area, grade level, topic, and student readiness level.
  - **Virtual, live lesson planning clinics with master teachers** by content area and grade level. These scheduled workshops will provide real time feedback cycles to CMs who come with instructional design artifacts or with questions regarding the creation/modification of instructional materials.
- **Self-Paced Modules for Constant Improvement.** Using a combination of virtual tools and personal reflections, CMs will have access to a set of modules that prompt them to self-assess, goal set, and monitor progress towards student and teacher outcomes. Modules will be grounded in clear, time-bound and objective benchmarks of teacher and student success. For example, a module on classroom learning environments will allow CMs to engage with recordings and artifacts from classrooms at various ends of the provided success spectrum. By then collecting and reviewing their own artifacts —videos, student survey responses, scripted lesson plans —CMs will engage in reflective prompts that

will help them to evolve their practices. CMs will then re-engage with this module in 2-3 weeks with their coach to assess progress to goal and determine next steps.

Post 90-days training and support After CMs have had the intensive support to get comfortable in front of students and in their teaching practice through our intensive first 90-days support, they transition into less intense, but regular ongoing supports.

- Content Learning Communities & Certification Coursework (24 hours per month): CMs will participate in biweekly content learning communities led by veteran teachers, where they learn the latest best practices for their grade level and subject areas to integrate into their teaching practice. CMs will also participate in a master's degree or certification program through accredited teaching certification programs.
- Coaching (4-8 hours per month): Program coaches serve as CMs' primary supervisor at TFA and conduct regular cycles of observation and feedback. Working closely with each of their assigned CMs, coaches analyze data and teacher leadership dispositions and mindsets, support CMs' development of culturally relevant teaching practices, and work with CMs to create individual plans for progress.
- Professional Development Series (bi-monthly): CMs will participate in ongoing day-long professional development series that are designed based on the immediate needs of CMs. Sessions may include: 1) differentiation based on student learning styles; 2) restorative practices for improved classroom culture and climate; 4) family engagement; 5) blended learning through technology; 6) improving academic rigor through collaborative learning.

### **A3. ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF THE TARGET POPULATION**

TFA is one of the nation's largest producers of teachers for high-need schools, and this project will directly support the recruitment and preparation of nearly 7,500 CMs in 2021, 2022, and 2023, through a nontraditional pathway. Those CMs will go on to teach in grades P-12

and all subjects in high-need schools in 50 regions in 36 states and Washington, DC; because of our broad national reach, we describe the populations we serve at a national level, which is difficult given that reporting across all states where we place is incomplete.<sup>1</sup>

In the over 2,400 schools where we place teachers, 81% of students receive free or reduced-price lunch; 12% and 17% of students are above or at the state standard on eight-grade math and reading state standardized tests, respectively.<sup>2</sup> Research shows that a disproportionate number of low-income students in public schools are taught by teachers who are less effective (Chetty, Friedman, & Rockoff, 2014; Goldhaber, Lavery, & Theobald, 2015; Sass, Hannaway, Xu, Figlio, & Feng, 2012). Given the numerous studies that empirically demonstrate the efficacy of our approaches to recruiting and preparing teachers, we are confident that our program will provide the students we serve with effective teachers. Part of our approach rests with fielding a diverse corps who understand and practice CRP, which is necessary to enable academic and personal success amongst high-need students in and outside of the classroom. Research shows that embedding CRP in teaching leads to: increased academic success for all learners; engaged and motivated students; and development of critical thinking skills (Christianakis, 2011; Ensign, 2003; Rodriguez, Jones, Pang, & Park, 2004; Tate, 1995). Understanding the importance of CRP can better position a CM to cultivate classrooms where high-need students meet the demands of rigorous standards and where their identities and strengths are valued and affirmed.

Approximately 91% of the students in our partner schools identify as students of color. Because of the demonstrated benefits for students of color, we place a critical focus on recruiting and fielding a diverse corps of teachers who reflect the backgrounds of their students; 51% of the 2019 corps identifies as a person of color. Having a teacher of color can be an incredibly

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<sup>1</sup> TFA purchases these data from MDR, which compiles publicly available national and state education data for all public schools.

<sup>2</sup> Based on data available for only 60% of the schools we serve.

empowering experience, enabling not only academic growth but also personal growth and confidence for students of color. Relative to their peers, teachers of color are more likely to have higher expectations of students of color; confront issues of racism; serve as advocates and cultural brokers; and develop more trusting relationships with students, particularly those with whom they share a background (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service, 2016). These teachers also serve as tangible models of success in education and in life.

We also focus on meeting the needs of our partner LEAs and schools. 78% of the schools we serve are Title I, which is too often correlated with teacher shortages in high-priority areas (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Thus, we prepare a disproportionate number of our CMs for placements with demonstrated shortages. Of the 7,500 teachers we will recruit, select, and prepare through this project, the majority will be prepared to teach in shortage areas, whether in hard-to-staff subjects or in communities that historically face shortages of teachers:

- **STEM.** We project that 26% of CMs will be prepared to teach STEM (12% math, 14% science).
- **Rural communities.** Over 12% of our CMs will teach in the 14 regions we consider predominantly rural.<sup>3</sup> 100% of CMs from these regions will also undergo pre-service training that is grounded in the context of serving in a rural community.
- **Other shortage areas.** 18% of CMs will be trained to teach in special education classrooms, 4% in bilingual or ESL classes, and 1% in foreign languages—with many of our other placements in other shortage areas specific to our partner LEAs and schools. For example, given the significant English Learner student population in the Rio Grande Valley region

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<sup>3</sup> TFA serves rural communities in Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Hawaii, Kentucky, Mississippi, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, the Rio Grande Valley, South Carolina, South Dakota, South Louisiana, and Washington.

(37% of students vs. 19.5% for the rest of Texas), the region requires its elementary teachers to be certified in bilingual education.

- **Native communities.** Across partner schools, approximately 1% of the students identify as Native (American Indian or Alaskan Native, as defined by NCES). Two of our regions, New Mexico and South Dakota, primarily serve students who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes. Nearly half of the students served by our Hawaii region are Native Hawaiian.

#### **A4. INCORPORATION INTO ONGOING WORK**

The activities funded with this SEED grant are integral to our mission of ensuring that all students have access to an excellent education. Consequently, we feel a strong sense of urgency to understand how to execute them to fidelity in our theory of action. This SEED grant presents an exciting learning opportunity through the required evaluation, which includes formative learning. As we implement these program innovations, we are engaging in a comprehensive effort to develop valid and reliable measures of teacher practice and student outcomes aligned to the key features of our program. As part of this evaluation, American STT for Research (AIR) will rigorously validate those measures, enabling us to refine them and ensure that their future use across regions will gauge intended outcomes. The external evaluation also will produce continuous data about the new approaches to recruitment, selection, training, and support to allow us to make ongoing improvements in national and regional program design and execution. Finally, the AIR study team will generate cost estimates of these new features, allowing us consider resource allocation and our return on investment against teacher and student outcomes.

### **B. SIGNIFICANCE**

#### **B1. MAGNITUDE OF RESULTS IN TEACHING AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

The potential impact of funding our nontraditional preparation model on improving teaching and student achievement in high-need classrooms is significant, not only in breadth but also in depth.

*Immediate impact on student achievement (demonstrated by studies that meet WWC standards)*

There is substantial evidence demonstrating the effectiveness, in terms of student achievement, of teachers recruited, selected, and trained by TFA—including three experimental studies that meet WWC standards without reservations. In 2013, Mathematica Policy Research (MPR) completed a randomized control trial study showing that secondary school math students taught by TFA teachers scored higher than students of other teachers in the same schools who entered teaching via less selective programs, traditional or alternative (Clark, et al., 2013). In 2017, MPR completed a randomized control trial study demonstrating that TFA teachers in lower elementary grades had a positive, statistically significant effect on students' reading achievement (Clark, et al., 2017). A 2004 MPR study also found elementary math students taught by novice TFA teachers scored higher than students of other comparably experienced teachers in the same schools (Decker, Mayer, & Glazerman, 2004).

Three other quasi-experimental studies, which meet the WWC standards with reservations, also offer evidence suggesting TFA teachers have a statistically significant, positive impact on student achievement. Two studies found evidence suggesting that TFA CMs are more effective at improving math achievement than other teachers with less than five years of experience (Henry, et al., 2014; Turner, Goodman, Adachi, Brite, & Decker, 2012). The last study demonstrates that TFA CMs are more effective than other teachers, regardless of experience, at improving achievement on high school science end-of-course exams (Xu, Hannaway, & Taylor, 2011). TFA's proven ability to produce teachers who are more likely to increase student achievement than other new teachers, and in some cases veteran teachers, indicates that investing in TFA's nontraditional preparation

model has the potential to foster effective instruction for over 350,000 students in over 2,400 schools across the country.

*High ratings and satisfaction from the States, LEAs, and schools* TFA has ranked at or near the top among teacher preparation programs in North Carolina and Tennessee, which compile rankings based on student achievement (Patterson & Bastian, 2014; Tennessee State Board of Education, 2019). The National Council on Teacher Quality recently released a report ranking effectiveness of traditional and alternative certification teacher preparation programs. Seven regions were included in the study because they operate their own state-approved teacher preparation programs. Six were ranked in the top 30 of all alternative certification programs and in the top 100 of all 434 secondary teacher preparation programs included in the analysis (Rickenbrode, Drake, Pomerance, & Walsh, 2018). In addition, in our most recent national principal survey conducted by independent research firm Westat (2019), 88% of principals reported that they were satisfied with CMs at their schools, 98% reported that CMs build trusting relationships with their colleagues, administrators, students, parents, and community members, and 92% indicated that they were satisfied with TFA's training and support.

*A lasting commitment to improving student achievement* In the short term, TFA CMs have a greater impact on student achievement than other new teachers and bring a sense of urgency to their classrooms and schools, but the TFA training experience is designed to deeply influence the personal and professional lives of CMs during and after their commitment. Although historically only about 15% of incoming CMs report that teaching was one of their top career options, nearly two-thirds stay in education after completing their commitments, with roughly 60% teaching at least a third year (Donaldson & Johnson, 2011). Another study found that participating in TFA makes individuals more optimistic about the life chances of children living in poverty and more likely to remain in education (Fryer & Dobbie, 2015). As a result of developing a commitment to education,

TFA alumni are a critical source of talent for schools, school systems, policy and advocacy organizations, nonprofits, the government, and other positions and organizations impacting P-12 education. Eighty percent of alumni work in a job that impacts education and/or low-income communities, and a study found that more founders and leaders of education organizations began their careers in TFA than in any other organization or program (Higgins, Hess, Weiner, & Robison, 2011).

Shaped by their corps experience, alumni exert strong leadership to expand educational opportunity. Examples include: Massachusetts Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, Jeff Riley, who earned that role partially due to the dramatic gains realized during his tenure as Lawrence Public Schools Superintendent; JoAnn Gama, Co-Founder of IDEA Public Schools, one of the nation's largest and highest impact charter networks; recently-appointed New Mexico Secretary of Education, Dr. Ryan Stewart who has focused his career on helping teachers, administrators, and districts implement school-wide changes that lead to better outcomes for students; Rhode Island Commissioner of Education, Angélica Infante-Green, the first person of color to lead the state's Department of education and who, while the deputy commissioner of instruction at the New York State Education Department, developed a blueprint for how schools can meet ELL students' needs while respecting their native language and culture; Kevin Huffman, former Tennessee Department of Education Commissioner, who launched the nation's first statewide teacher evaluation system that utilizes student growth; John White, former Louisiana State Superintendent and one of the country's longest-serving state superintendents; and DC State Superintendent of Education, Hanseul Kang, who spearheaded work to develop DC's Every Student Succeeds Act plan and new DC School Report Card to help families understand how schools are performing. With this grant, we are potentially ushering in the next generation of educational

leaders, whether it be in the classroom or as a future leader of a state Department of Education, all collectively working together to ensure all children have access to a high-quality education.

## **B2. DEVELOPMENT AND ADVANCEMENT OF THEORY, KNOWLEDGE, AND PRACTICES**

TFA prides itself on both learning from our partners in this work — LEAs, university partners, education researchers, students, parents, and the education community writ large. We also believe we play a critical role in advancing theory, knowledge, and practice in the field.

Recruitment and Selection Over the last 30 years, TFA has gathered research and insights on talent strategies (e.g. job descriptions, role profiles, compensation, and title) and ways in which to recruit top prospects, as well as competencies and skills that contribute to selecting effective teachers. We continuously refine our understanding of how we recruit and who we select for our corps. Our recruitment model is building a pipeline of high achieving, diverse prospects, while our selection model is identifying teachers with skills and mindsets that are likely to set them up for success to teach high-need students in low-income schools

To that end, as we make shifts to our model based on our past programmatic experiences and our current research on Gen Z, we are gathering information that will help understand how to spark interest in educational equity work among this generation and how to engage them to seek and commit to public service work. We are also gathering information to help predict skills and competencies of successful teachers as compared to their less successful peers. As the predictors of a successful teachers have been unclear within the field, we believe that our evaluation, particularly research question #1: What are the effects of CMs on student achievement, relative to similar teachers from other preparation routes? Will bring critical information regarding our recruitment strategies and selection competencies and their correlation to student achievement. This information can inform hiring practices, particularly who should be recruited to interview for teaching positions

what competencies may be most useful to assess during the initial interview phases. Ultimately, our recruitment and selection insights learned through this project can lead to more effective recruitment practices and hiring decision, leading to improved student outcomes, not only for TFA but for the sector more broadly.

STT In a COVID-19 context, we are training our first cohort of teachers virtually; it is fundamentally different than anything in the field right now. As we answer the question of, “how do we get our teachers prepared in this current context?”, we are exploring different technology platforms, engaging with partners in new ways, and getting a clearer understanding of the unique value add of specific experts, content, and resources to leverage to create a robust virtual learning opportunity. As we do not know what the future of schooling will look like, we are adding to our teachers’ skillsets and preparing them to teach in virtual, hybrid, and traditional classroom settings. Regardless of where education goes, we are training our teachers to better understand how to use technology to advance teaching practices, gain new knowledge, be innovative about how to use technology to build ongoing relationships with kids, parents, and the broader community, and ultimately drive their students towards academic and social emotional outcomes in various teaching environments. To ensure our teachers truly are prepared to teach in the fall in various contexts, we are ramping up the support we provide them in the first 90 days with several weekly professional development engagements throughout their first few weeks of school which is not only new for TFA, but also for the field broadly. Through our STT and our first 90 days work we are acquiring new knowledge and new practices, which will be beneficial to the broader field and may inform future theory of teacher development and support.

Alumni Most of our alumni begin their work in education with us. After spending two years leading in the classroom as teachers, many TFA alumni work as lifelong advocates for better educational opportunities and outcomes for kids. They serve in many different ways—as teachers,

principals, district leaders, and policymakers. TFA alumni have built on the relationships they forged during their TFA experience to launch schools, nonprofits, socially conscious businesses, and civic initiatives that have profoundly affected the education ecosystem. For example, two of our STT partners, Springboard Collaborative and Bright Morning, are alumni-led organizations; one is contributing to advancements in reading science, while the other is focusing on creating SEL strategies for teachers to create healthy classroom environments and model social emotional well-being to their students. As our alumni network continues to grow, we see evidence each year of their efforts contributing to significant advancements in the field.

### **B3. DISSEMINATION PLANS**

We envision two main paths for disseminating information—one aimed primarily at the TFA network, and the other directed toward partners and the broader field.

**Internal Network:** Given our network infrastructure, we utilize a networked learning approach to support regions in creating a connected continuum of training and development aligned with our new teaching as leadership framework. The external evaluation’s foci on ongoing learning throughout the grant and on highlighting successful regions, position our organization to generate information that is deeply valuable and relevant for both our national infrastructure and for all regions. We will utilize our internal knowledge management systems to ensure that regions access and leverage SEED learning. The most relevant strategy is helping regions to “knowledge map,” a process by which our national staff will help regions adapt to their own contexts successful strategies surfaced through the evaluation case studies. Further, we will make information, learnings, and resources from the evaluation easily accessible for all regions and TFA staff through webinars, white papers, internal-facing websites, communications channels, and org-wide social media platforms.

**External Network:** TFA will harness its community outreach and marketing efforts to communicate learnings, including evaluation findings, to the field through traditional print vehicles and social media channels (e.g., through TFA’s “The Briefing” newsletter which has a broad circulation to alumni, CMs, staff, and the general public; white papers published through external education organizations; and summary findings through social media channels such as Twitter and Facebook; and our internal website stories). We commit to present learnings at relevant conferences such as American Education Research Association and the Annual Carnegie Summit and to submit articles to peer-reviewed publications to be considered for publication in national journals. Additionally, AIR will publish a report on their website at the conclusion of the final evaluation. Through our broad set of partnerships and outreach to the broader field, we are eager to share our SEED learnings.

## **C. QUALITY OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

### **C1. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND OUTCOMES**

Under the proposed SEED project, TFA will: 1) recruit and rigorously select a diverse group of 7,500 CMs over the next three years; 2) provide intensive pre-service preparation through summer training STT; 3) provide regional ongoing support and development; 4) increase access to effective STEM teachers, including growing participation in CS education through early exposure to CT/CS opportunities; 5) foster knowledge and promote the development of skills to prepare students to be informed, thoughtful, and productive individuals and citizens; and 6) spur investment in QOZs. In addition, TFA will report on the following SEED program performance measures: 1) The percentage of teacher participants who serve concentrations of high-need students; 2) the percentage of teacher participants who serve concentrations for high-need students and are highly effective; 3) the percentage of teacher participants who serve concentrations of high-need students, are highly effective, and serve for at least two years; 4) the cost per such participant; and 5) the number of

grantees with evaluations that meet the WWC standards with reservations. Appendix

● details key project goals, objectives, measures, and targets for all six goals, as well as for the SEED program performance measures.

## **C2. MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Successful execution of this SEED project means that TFA will achieve all six goals mentioned in Section C1. With nearly 30 years of experience executing our program, we have a strong team to ensure we achieve the objectives and goals of our proposed project on time and within budget.

Leading the organization is TFA's CEO, Elisa Villanueva Beard, as well as TFA's twenty-person National Board which manages the organization towards outcomes and reviews key metrics. In total, 9 senior leaders will oversee the implementation and execution of the proposed project, which includes the team leaders of our recruitment, admissions, selection, STT, and Teacher Leadership Development teams. These staff members will be responsible for recruiting and rigorously selecting CMs, providing intensive pre-service preparation to and ongoing training and support to CMs, advancing our STEM and SEL work, and ensuring our we are placing in the most disadvantaged communities across the country, in ●OZs over the course of our three-year grant period. Please see Appendix R for a detailed timeline of specific activities, and the TFA personnel who will lead this work. Please also see Appendix S for detailed ●qualifications of key personnel who will ensure strong execution of the project.

## **C3. ENSURING FEEDBACK AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

As a learning organization, we are deeply invested in collecting data to analyze program implementation and inform improvement. Thus, across all of our teams and programming strands, common principles drive our feedback and continuous improvement activities. First, all of our teams set goals and identify appropriate measures by which to assess progress toward achieving

them. Our teams also identify and implement methods for collecting data on those measures to help quantify success. Finally, we are committed to using those data to adapt our approaches.

For example, the success of our robust recruitment efforts requires utilizing continuous data collection. Our recruitment team examines data constantly, sometimes daily, to measure their progress toward benchmarks. Alongside their managers, on-the-ground recruiters use those analyses to identify next steps to help meet benchmarks. Our in-house Performance Analytics team supports this continuous improvement by identifying notable trends in order to adjust performance. Learnings and best practices are then shared broadly across all recruitment staff. Finally, deeper reflections on progress and learning occur after each deadline to enable mid-season pivots to further outcomes (See Appendices H and I for sample recruitment data dashboards).

Additionally, our national STT team will collect a core dataset to help teams understand CM and staff experiences, primarily through surveys. Given that this is our first virtual STT, the insights and data gained will go through a particularly rigorous analysis in order to inform the activities supported by this grant. First, throughout STT there are weekly check-ins between those running STT, our national teacher leadership development (TLD) team, and our regional leaders including executive directors and regional head of program. This will allow real-time programmatic changes to be made during STT, as well as allow regional leaders to adjust their ongoing support cycles to meet the needs of their corps. After STT, our TLD and org-wide learning teams will engage in a process to synthesize insights and debrief the qualitative and quantitative findings. A high-level summary will be shared out with the organization, and more detailed information will be shared with regional program leaders. This information will be used to inform priorities and adjustments for programming within the year, as well inform programmatic adjustments for the following year. Finally, STT based data are aligned to the data we collect and examine throughout a CM's

two-year commitment to enable a longitudinal analysis of the CM training experience and identify inflection points.

Regions collect data from multiple sources to inform improvement in their ongoing support and development, along with measures to drive continuous improvement among individual CMs. They usually conduct short surveys after All Corps events to assess strength of programming and use these data to make adjustments or changes in subsequent All Corps events. Regional teams survey CMs after the first eight weeks of school, at mid-year, and at the end of the school year to measure program health and corps culture, driving broader changes in vision and programming. Finally, most regions collect student achievement data in a formative manner to inform CM development plans and regional coaching and supports. Regions also use summative student achievement data as another measure to inform adjustments to regions' broader programs, especially, in a particular grade or content area.

Finally, as part of the external evaluation, AIR will facilitate ongoing learning from implementation across regions, helping us to understand areas of success, diagnose problems, and identify potential improvements in teacher training and supports. AIR will facilitate conferences to engage key TFA stakeholders in understanding the results from the evaluation and identifying resulting actions to support program improvement. See Section D further information on the evaluation.

#### **D. QUALITY OF THE PROJECT EVALUATION**

The American Institute for Research (AIR) will conduct a quasi-experimental outcomes evaluation and a formative evaluation of TFA's new program. The **outcomes evaluation** will use industry standard analytic methods to generate evidence on the extent to which TFA's programming affects student learning and teacher practice and is designed to meet WWC v4.4 standards with reservations. The **formative evaluation** will provide timely evidence of implementation and how

CMs are learning and developing to inform continuous improvement activities. The proposed evaluation is aligned with the scheduled program delivery and implementation; is fully responsive to SEED evaluation and reporting requirements; and is designed to provide actionable feedback for improvement to TFA.

Exhibit 1 presents the research questions (RQs), outcome measures, and data sources that will be used to guide evaluation activities. The primary aim of the outcome evaluation is to generate valid evidence of program effects on student and teacher outcomes, leveraging available data to minimize burden on schools and teachers. AIR will use a quasi-experimental design that meets WWC standards with reservations to examine student achievement in the first and second years of teaching, particularly in STEM subjects. The complementary formative evaluation will describe cohort diversity, implementation, and the extent to which, and under what, conditions CMs are learning and developing with a specific focus on skills to promote students’ SEL and integrate computational thinking into instructional practice. The formative evaluation will help TFA learn from implementation of the key programming across regions and cohorts, diagnose challenges, assess costs, and make timely decisions on improvements.

**Exhibit 2. Research Questions, Outcomes Measures, and Data Sources**

Research Questions	Outcome Measures	Data Sources
<b>Outcome Evaluation</b>		
<b>RQ 1.</b> What are the effects of CMs on student achievement, relative to similar teachers from other preparation routes? Do school and teacher characteristics moderate impacts?	Standardized scores from state achievement tests in ELA, math, and science	Achievement data from education agencies for students in tested grades and subjects in 2020-21, 2021–22 and 2022–23 for students of CMs and comparison teachers
<b>RQ 2.</b> Do CMs demonstrate more effective instructional practices, relative to similar teachers from other preparation routes?	Classroom observation scores from local teacher evaluation systems	Classroom observation data from education agencies in 2021–22 and 2022–23 for CMs and comparison teachers
<b>Formative Evaluation</b>		

<b>RQ 3.</b> What effect does adoption of the new approach have on CM perceptions of preparation, training, and ongoing support?	Scaled survey scores on constructs that measure perceptions of key features	TFA Corps Strengths Index (CSI) and Corps and Alumni Learning Index (CALI) survey data for 2011–12 to 2020–21 (pre-intervention years), 2021–22 and 2022-23
<b>RQ 4.</b> To what extent is the overall corps more racially diverse as a result of these changes?	Racial diversity of the overall corps	TFA corps demographic data for pre-intervention years, 2021–22 and 2022–23
<b>RQ 5.</b> Are new approaches to recruitment, selection, training, and ongoing support implemented as intended?	Scaled survey scores on constructs that measure key features; frequency of themes	TFA CM survey data for 2021–22, and 2022–23; interviews with TFA national staff in fall 2021 and 2022; document review
<b>RQ 6.</b> What are CMs’ perceptions of training to support student SEL and STEM/CS integration?	Scaled survey scores on constructs that measure supports for student SEL and STEM/CS integration; frequency of themes	TFA CM survey data for 2021–22 and 2022–23; focus groups with CMs in fall 2021 and 2022
<b>RQ7.</b> What are the costs for TFA of the new approach to recruitment, selection, preservice training, and ongoing supports?	Averages on time allocation survey items; average annual implementation costs	TFA CM survey data 2021–22, and 2022–23; interviews with TFA national staff

## **D1. EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS THAT MEETS WWC STANDARDS**

To estimate impacts on student achievement and teacher practice, AIR will use a propensity score matching design. This design allows for rigorous and cost-efficient evaluation of outcomes with large samples of students in different grades and subjects and across the multiple communities served by TFA, which would not be possible with a randomized experiment. Empirical within-study comparisons demonstrate that studies using propensity score methods can reproduce the results of randomized experiments (Pohl, Steiner, Eiserman, Soellner, & Cook, 2009; Shadish, Clark, & Steiner, 2008). AIR’s team has experience and demonstrated success in obtaining administrative data from LEAs and SEAs for similar quasi-experimental evaluations.

AIR will construct a propensity score model to ensure a valid contrast. The proposed model will identify non-TFA teachers with similar demographic characteristics, who teach students with similar prior achievement and demographic composition, and who teach in schools similar to the

school where CMs teach.<sup>4</sup> This model will be applied within LEAs, restricting the pool of comparison teachers to those with the same years of experience as CMs (in the first or second year of teaching, depending on the analysis) who teach students in tested grades and subjects. To increase statistical power, AIR will match each CM to as many suitable matches (e.g., those that are within .25 standard deviations (*SDs*) of the propensity score distribution) as are available for grade and subject taught and LEA. We anticipate that, on average, each CM will have two suitable matched comparisons. If matching at the teacher-level alone does not provide adequate balance, we will apply a second stage of matching at the student level to identify the individual students who are most similar to the CMs' students. We will iterate this process until the two groups of teachers and students are balanced on individual key covariates.

### ***Outcome Evaluation***

**RQ 1. Student Achievement.** AIR will conduct matching separately for the 2021 and 2022 cohorts and for the first and second year of teaching to ensure valid matches for each group. This will result **in three main analytic samples** and contrasts: 1) 2021 TFA cohort in the first year vs. matched teachers in the first year of teaching (2021–22 data); 2) 2022 TFA cohort in the first year vs. matched teachers in the first year of teaching (2022–23 data); and 3) 2021 TFA cohort in the second year vs. matched teachers in the second year of teaching (2022–23 data).<sup>5</sup> Regression analyses will estimate mean differences in overall student achievement (i.e., measures of English language arts, math, and science achievement) between students taught by a CM and student taught by matched comparison teachers. Models will be multilevel, with students nested in teachers, fixed

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<sup>4</sup> Non-TFA teachers are defined as those from all other teacher preparation programs with the same years of experience teaching in the same LEAs as the CMs in the cohorts included in the evaluation.

<sup>5</sup> As needed, AIR and TFA will work with the Department to request a no-cost extension to complete analyses and reporting of analyses that draw on 2022-23 student achievement data.

LEA effects, random teacher effects, and controlling for prior-year student achievement and other covariates used in the matching process.<sup>6</sup>

An advantage of this quasi-experimental design is that it captures a wide swath of students taught by CMs in multiple regions and contexts. This provides an opportunity to examine potential treatment effect moderators. AIR will examine how school-level variables (geographic and demographic characteristics) and teacher-level variables (grade and subject taught) moderate student achievement effects. These analyses will provide evidence on the extent to which CM effects vary among school and teacher contexts, which will contribute to understanding the external validity of the findings that has not been addressed in prior TFA impact evaluations.

We recommend powering the study to detect an impact on student achievement of approximately  $0.40$  *SDs*, similar to the improvement found in prior TFA impact studies (e.g., Clark et al., 2013). In determining the required sample size, we assume the achievement analyses will include six LEAs (selected considering QOZ determination, size, geography, and availability of data, including classroom observation data) that comprise TFA regions. Selected LEAs in approximately 5-7 TFA regions (Connecticut, Hawaii, Kansas City, New Jersey, Ohio, South Carolina, and Washington, D.C.) will have an average of 40 CMs and 80 matched comparison teachers in tested grades and subjects per LEA per cohort, and an average of 20 students per teacher. This provides an estimated sample (treatment and comparison) of 720 teachers and 14,400 students per cohort. The estimated minimum detectable effect size for each of the three analytic samples is  $.09$  *SDs*.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Matching and outcome analyses will be restricted to tested grades and students with available preintervention student achievement scores. Data from 2020–21 will provide preintervention scores for the 2021 cohort and data from 2021–22 will provide preintervention scores for the 2022 cohort.

<sup>7</sup> A final evaluation analysis will pool the estimated effects from the first year of teaching across the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years for additional statistical power.

**RQ 2. Instructional Practice.** Drawing from the matched teacher samples identified for RQ 1, AIR will examine differences in observed use of effective instructional practices, as measured by local teacher evaluation systems. Regression analyses will estimate mean differences in overall teacher observation scores between CMs and comparison teachers, controlling for teacher background characteristics, grades and subjects taught, and school compositional characteristics. Scores will be standardized within LEA and combined using LEA fixed effects in the regression analyses. The analyses will focus on the three contrasts identified in RQ 1 for the 2021 and 2022 cohorts. Following the power assumptions of RQ 1, each contrast would have an MDES of  $.18 SDs$  with 80% power and 40 teachers per LEA (assuming a 2:1 teacher match ratio).<sup>8</sup> Recent meta-analytic estimates of teacher practice intervention effects (Garrett, Citkowitz, & Williams, 2019; Kraft, Blazar, & Hogan, 2017) report average effects between  $.4$  and  $.5 SDs$ , suggesting the proposed sample should be large enough to detect improvements in instructional practice.

## **D2. PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK AND PERIODIC ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS**

To provide TFA with regular performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress towards achieving the intended student and teacher outcomes, AIR will assess implementation of the proposed programming. We will draw on indicators of teacher progress in learning and development from longitudinal surveys of CMs, CM demographic characteristic data, documents and records on teachers and program activities, interviews with national TFA staff, and focus groups with CMs. Across the six LEAs and the two evaluation cohorts, we estimate collecting and analyzing formative data on the activities implemented to prepare approximately 960 CMs. AIR will employ qualitative methods to analyze formative data and provide TFA with deep and nuanced feedback about how CMs are learning and developing, as well as the extent to which the program is implemented as intended.

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<sup>8</sup> This assumes that 25% of the variance in practice outcomes are explained by covariates.

As mentioned in Sections B3 and C3, emergent evaluation findings, including evidence on the effects of TFA’s programming, will feed into TFA’s continuous improvement process through intentional activities: interim presentations of findings at key planning points for TFA each year; a TFA stakeholder advisory group to guide the evaluation and ensure relevance of monitoring and improvement efforts; and co-interpretation of findings with TFA leadership using a facilitated process developed by AIR (see Appendix T for details on co-interpretation). These activities will help inform decisions to optimize programming and provide supports.

### ***Formative Evaluation***

The formative evaluation describes implementation and the extent to which, and under what conditions, CMs are learning and developing. This evaluation component also will help TFA learn from implementation across regions and cohorts, diagnose challenges, estimate costs, and make decisions on improvements, as they implement the program.

**RQ 3. CM Perceptions of Preparation, Training, and Ongoing Support.** Leveraging historical TFA survey data (i.e., CSI and CALI), across regions, from 2011–12 through 2022–23 AIR will estimate the effect of TFA’s program on CM perceptions of preparation, training, and ongoing support. AIR will use an interrupted time-series design, a rigorous method to detect change over time when many years of outcome data are available (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002). The time series analyses will examine the extent to which introducing new programming (2021–22 school year) coincides with shifts in survey outcome measures related to preparation and training provided during STT and ongoing training and support provided in the first and second years of teaching. These analyses will provide initial evidence of successful program implementation and allow us to describe 1) changes in overall trends in CM perceptions of preparation, training, and ongoing support; 2) variation in trend changes across regions; and 3) the extent to which the characteristics of teachers in regions explain the variation in changes in trends. We assume an

average of 480 CMs per year with available data, across six regions, providing estimated power to detect average changes in outcomes of approximately  $.25 SDs$ .<sup>9</sup>

**RQ 4: Racial Diversity of CMs.** We will draw on TFA recruitment and selection data from 2011-12 through 2022–23 to compare the proportion of CMs who represent a racially diverse corps. Specifically, we will compare the proportion of CMs who identify as people of color before and after new program implementation using a time series analysis similar to that described to address RQ 3. Like RQ 3, findings from this analysis will provide initial evidence of successful program implementation and allow us to describe changes in trends and variation across regions.

**RQ 5. Implementation of New Approach.** AIR will assess the fidelity of implementation and examine adaptations and challenges in implementation. For fidelity of implementation, AIR and TFA will identify specific implementation indicators for program delivery, activities, and participation, aligned to the primary features of the logic model (i.e., recruitment, selection, summer STT, ongoing training and support). AIR will code data from program documents and CM surveys, supplemented by interviews with TFA staff (see below), to determine whether expected thresholds for adequate implementation were met for the implementation indicators in 2021–22 and 2022–23. This method will provide a quantitative and replicable assessment of the extent to which program features were implemented as expected by TFA and the six LEAs.

To provide more nuanced evidence on implementation, AIR will interview 4–6 TFA national staff and 3–4 TFA staff in each participating LEA, including program leaders, coaches, and facilitators in fall 2021 and 2022. The protocols and analyses will focus on the implementation of key program activities for each feature of the new program, identify factors that facilitate and support implementation, as well as challenges and barriers to implementation and what adaptations

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<sup>9</sup> This assumes that the between-cohort variance is approximately 3% and that covariates explain about 25% of the variance in outcomes.

were made. For interviews, AIR will use NVivo qualitative software and analyze interview transcripts inductively, incorporating a systematic method of managing data through reduction, organization, and connection (Dey, 1993; LeCompte, 2000). Qualitative findings from the interviews will provide formative and timely feedback on implementation from the perspectives of informed respondents with direct roles in implementing the new program.

**RQ 6. CM Perceptions of Support for Student SEL and STEM/CS Integration.** AIR will draw on CM survey data, supplemented by measures of perceptions about supporting student SEL and the integration of STEM/CS (e.g., computational thinking), to describe CMs' perceptions of these foci of TFA's new program.<sup>10</sup> AIR will use descriptive statistics to examine variation in CM perceptions of these supports by teacher characteristics, regions and cohorts. Survey findings will provide evidence about the extent to which CMs are learning and developing across the TFA ecosystem that is consistent with learning and development mindsets.

In addition, AIR will conduct focus groups with CMs from each of the six participating LEAs in fall 2021 and 2022. Focus groups will include 6-8 participants and draw on protocols designed to gather CMs perspectives about the training they receive in summer STT and through ongoing coaching to support student SEL and integrate STEM/CS into their instruction. Specifically, protocols will focus on CMs experiences in the program and relevance to school needs; how programming supports learning and development, with a particular emphasis on SEL supports offered through the partnerships with YCEI and FuelEd and STEM/CS supports related to computational thinking. AIR will analyze the focus group data to provide in-depth and contextual evidence about CM mindsets, experiences, and development.

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<sup>10</sup> To measure CMs' perceptions about supports for student SEL, we will draw on reliable instruments such as those developed by the *Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence* (see, <https://www.ycei.org/assessment>). To measure CMs' perceptions about supports for STEM/CS integration into instruction, we will draw on reliable instruments such as the *Teacher Efficacy and Attitudes Towards STEM Survey* (Friday STT for Educational Innovation, 2012).

**RQ 7: New Program Costs.** To address RQ7 we plan to focus on the costs faced by TFA to develop and implement their new program.<sup>11</sup> We will calculate costs using a resource cost model (RCM), a method developed by AIR for organizing resource data (staff effort and non-personnel items) used in delivering program services (Chambers, 1999). RCMs are populated with quantities of the specific staff and non-personnel resources devoted to different activities along with their corresponding compensation rates and their unit prices, respectively. The model then uses this information to calculate detailed costs associated with each activity.

Specifically, we will collect information about time allocated to these key program features and salaries of the staff involved. We will also collect data on the non-personnel expenses that may be related to recruiting, selecting, and training CMs (e.g., costs to purchase materials, software, etc.), annualizing the costs of the investments in resources and equipment that are used over multiple years. We will collect this information through interviews with national TFA training staff and their designees who are familiar with TFA’s recruitment, selection, and training processes, as well as through the collection of available extant documentation containing data on spending for these functions. We will convert the overall costs into a cost-per-year-served estimate by dividing the overall cost by the typical number of years taught for CMs.

### **D3. OBJECTIVE PERFORMANCE MEASURES ALIGNED TO OUTCOMES**

AIR will examine student and teacher outcomes aligned to TFA’s new program implementation, using objective and reliable measures provided by LEAs and TFA.

**Academic achievement** (RQ 1) will be measured with students’ scores on state standardized tests, obtained from education agencies in regions, which are valid, reliable, and policy-relevant as

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<sup>11</sup> Calculating the costs of the new program to other stakeholders, while more comprehensive, would not lend itself to informing TFA programing decisions and would be far more complex and burdensome. For example, one might consider calculating the costs to LEAs hiring TFA-trained teachers or teachers trained through other routes (e.g., teacher residency programs, traditional undergraduate or graduate college/university programs). These analyses are outside the scope of the proposed evaluation.

determined by the WWC v4.1. The assessments will include ELA and mathematics in Grades 3–8 and high school, plus science in available grade levels and subjects. Students’ test scores will be standardized within grade, subject, and LEA or state.

**Instructional practice (RQ 2)** will be measured using teachers’ scores from observation components of state or local teacher evaluation systems. These observation scores provide face validity, reflecting standards adopted by states or LEA (Cohen & Goldhaber, 2016). Data will be obtained from LEA systems that include multiple observations of teachers per year by trained school leaders and validated protocols with scaled overall ratings of instruction, standardized within LEA. This approach can provide valid data with sufficient variability among early career teachers and internal consistency across observation cycles (0.88 to 0.95) for estimating impacts of a teacher preparation program (Gerdeman, et al., 2017).

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