

THE TEACHING ACADEMIES PROGRAM, an Urban Teacher Residency for San Francisco

What's the need?

In San Francisco, as in most urban school districts:

- The least experienced teachers are often placed in the lowest performing/highest needs schools.
- There are higher turnover rates for new teachers at the lowest performing/highest needs schools thus creating a revolving door at these schools.
- A report from the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future pegs the cost of teacher turnover at \$50,000 per teacher. In San Francisco these costs are estimated to be between three and nine million dollars annually.
- Research consistently shows that academic achievement lags in classrooms of first year teachers. Students who constantly have first year teachers are at a distinct disadvantage in terms of their academic achievement.

Developing an Urban Teacher Residency in San Francisco

Partners from San Francisco Unified School District, the San Francisco Education Fund, Stanford University, University of San Francisco, San Francisco State University and the United Educators of San Francisco have joined together to bring an Urban Teacher Residency program to San Francisco to address issues of teacher recruitment, development and retention.

Part of a growing national movement

Over the past several years a new model, Urban Teacher Residencies (UTR), designed to train teachers specifically for the challenges of teaching in urban settings have had success in recruiting and retaining new teachers. According to a report by the Aspen Institute, after three years 90 percent of Boston's UTR graduates and 95 percent of Chicago's UTR graduates are still teaching. This compares to 30 – 50% of teachers who leave within the first five years of teaching nationally. That number is much higher in high poverty schools and in hard-to-staff subjects such as math, science and special education. (Berry, B., Montgomery, D., Curtis, R., Hernandez, M., Wurzel, J., Snyder, J., 2008)

The federal government has also recognized Urban Teacher Residencies as a promising practice and is supporting their development through Department of Education grants.

Key Attributes

The following core principles for Urban Teacher Residencies have served as the basis for our planning to date. They are the lessons drawn from successful Urban Teacher Residency programs in the Chicago and Boston.

1. Weave education theory and classroom practice tightly together;
2. Focus on Resident learning along side an experienced trained Mentor
3. Group candidates in cohorts to cultivate professional learning community and foster collaboration;
4. Build effective partnerships
5. Serve school districts
6. Support residents once they are hired as teachers of record; and
7. Establish and support differentiated career goals for experienced teachers

The Basics – What will the program look like in San Francisco?

- Cohorts of residents are placed in designated “Teaching Academies,” that are chosen because of their ability to serve diverse students well.
- Residents learn in the classroom of a highly accomplished master teacher for an entire year while taking tightly connected coursework from university partners.
- Upon completion of the residency, new teachers are supported for their first two years of teaching through an enhanced induction program.
- Residents receive a stipend and free or reduced tuition for their training year in return for 3 – 4 years of district service.
- The first cohort will begin in summer, 2010.

Momentum

There is great energy and commitment from all of the partners to bringing Urban Teacher Residencies to San Francisco. All of the partners feel strongly that it is critical that we do “whatever it takes” to make this project happen. We believe that an Urban Residency program can have a positive impact on how San Francisco teachers are trained and how they are supported through their first years of teaching and beyond. Most of all, we believe that the program can help turn around schools and improve achievement for our students who have struggled the most.

Contact information

If you are interested in learning more and/or supporting the San Francisco Urban Teacher Residency program, please contact:

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To learn more about other Urban Teacher Residency programs:

www.utrunited.org

To read the complete Aspen Institute/ Center for Teaching Quality Report:

<http://www.teachingquality.org/utr>