

Executive Summary of

North Carolina Teacher Corps Final Report

Impact, Qualitative Assessment, and Policy Recommendations

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NORTH CAROLINA TEACHER CORPS FINAL REPORT: IMPACT, QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT, AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Executive Summary

One of the most important goals of North Carolina's Race to the Top (RttT) proposal is to increase the access of students in the state's most challenging and lowest-achieving schools to effective teachers. With this report, the Consortium for Educational Research and Evaluation–North Carolina has completed its evaluation of North Carolina's use of RttT funds to develop a North Carolina Teacher Corps (NCTC) and to expand the presence of Teach for America (TFA) in the state. The evaluation's goals have been to assess the extent to which these programs contribute to an increase in the presence of effective teachers in the high-need schools and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) targeted in the RttT proposal. This final report includes a summative analysis of quantitative and qualitative data gathered during the first two years of the NCTC initiative, as well as a final summary of TFA's RttT-funded expansion.

Summative Findings: North Carolina Teacher Corps

Capacity

- In total, 94 NCTC corps members were employed across 23 LEAs between 2012-13 and 2013-14; however, in neither year did the program meet its targets (100 and 150 corps members, respectively).
- The strength of the candidates admitted to the program (based on undergraduate GPA and the selectivity of their undergraduate institutions) increased in the second year.
- The greatest loss of corps members occurred between their initial acceptance into the program and their employment—that is, before they even entered a classroom. In response, in 2013, NCTC introduced mechanisms to reduce attrition during this period.

Preparation Quality

- The components of NCTC's training that were most beneficial for corps members were: the scope and quality of content provided; the quality, professionalism, and ongoing support of program and training staff; and the in-class training segment that provided valuable hands-on teaching experience.
- Programs like NCTC with limited time for pre-service training can make better use of that training time by: placing more emphasis on the development of the knowledge and skills that most support early-career teachers (such as classroom management); providing in-class experiences ahead of the information-driven segments of their training, to provide corps members with context for what they learn during that training; and placing corps members in classroom training environments that closely align with school and classroom environments in which corps members are likely to secure employment.

Initiative Effectiveness

- Early evidence suggests that retention rates after the initial two-year commitment may be higher for NCTC than for similar programs.
- Evidence is mixed, however, as to whether an emphasis on the recruitment of corps members with North Carolina ties is a key reason for those retention rates; the network of support provided by the program during corps members' first two years appears to have been at least as important, if not more so.

Teacher Effectiveness

- Sufficient quantitative evidence of corps member effectiveness was not available in time for inclusion in this report. However, qualitative evidence suggests that peer and administrator perceptions of corps member classroom performance were similar to their perceptions of the performance of other early-career teachers with non-traditional preparation backgrounds.

Summative Findings: Teach for America-Eastern North Carolina

Capacity

- TFA placed or retained 157 corps members in Eastern North Carolina at the beginning of school year 2011-12, 219 corps members at the beginning of 2012-13, and 280 corps members at the beginning of the 2013-14 school year. Overall, between 2010-11 and 2013-14, RttT funds helped TFA-ENC exceed its overall goal for growth in Eastern North Carolina.
- Since 2008, about 87% of TFA-ENC corps members have completed two full years of teaching, though the preliminary retention rate for the 2012 cohort (75%)—recorded at the beginning of the 2013-14 school year, before that cohort completed its two-year commitment—already was much lower than the rate for the four preceding cohorts.

Teacher Effectiveness

- TFA corps members continue to be rated both quantitatively and qualitatively as highly effective teachers, relative to their early-career peers.

Administration of North Carolina Teacher Corps by Teach for America¹

- During the 2013 session, the North Carolina General Assembly passed legislation that named TFA as the administrator of NCTC as of July 1, 2014, beginning with the 2014-15 cohort. The 2013-14 cohort will be supported in its second year by RttT no-cost extension funding.
- TFA plans to expand its presence in Eastern North Carolina by providing an estimated 8 to 12 first-year corps members to Pitt County Schools—one of the former NCTC LEAs—for the 2014-15 school year.
- TFA's support for a third North Carolina chapter, also beginning in 2014-15, will provide 30 corps members to Guilford County Schools—another former NCTC LEA.

¹ <http://www.ncleg.net/Sessions/2013/Bills/Senate/HTML/S402v7.html>; see Section 8.21.

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