

Research on Teach For America

As one of the largest and most-studied teacher-preparation programs in the country, Teach For America actively welcomes and pursues rigorous, independent evaluations to measure our impact and continuously improve our program. Evidence of corps members' positive impact spans multiple regions, all subject areas and grade levels, both during and after the corps experience. Below is a summary of the most recent research on Teach For America.

CORPS MEMBER IMPACT

Over time, research has shown that Teach For America corps members' impact on student achievement is at least as great as that of comparable beginning teachers. The most rigorous studies have found that corps members' impact on student achievement exceeds that of other teachers in the same high-need schools—even when compared with veteran and fully certified teachers.

ALUMNI IMPACT

Teach For America has nearly 28,000 alumni, including some of the most influential and effective advocates in the effort to expand educational opportunity. More founders and top leaders of entrepreneurial education organizations started their careers with Teach For America than any other company or organization. Emerging research and our internal data also show that joining Teach For America markedly affects participants' career paths as well as mindsets about race and the potential for all children to succeed regardless of their background.

WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

STATEWIDE STUDIES OF TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS

Teach For America is among the most effective sources of new teachers in low-income communities, according to studies about the impact of different teacher-preparation programs in Louisiana ([2009](#)), North Carolina ([2010](#), [2011](#), and [2012](#)), and Tennessee ([2010](#) and [2011](#)). Each of these statewide studies found that corps members often help their students achieve academic gains at rates equal to or larger than those for students of other beginning, and also veteran, teachers.

NATIONAL IMPACT EVALUATIONS

In 2010, Teach For America received one of the largest grants out of nearly 1,700 applications to the U.S. Department of Education's [Investing in Innovation](#) (i3) competition. The i3 scale-up grants required applicants to provide evidence of promoting meaningful student achievement, based on objective, methodologically sound studies. Committed to ongoing evaluations, Teach For America is using a portion of the grant for a national randomized study—research methodology widely regarded as the gold standard—of our developmental training model.

In 2004, [Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.](#) found that students of Teach For America corps members made at least as much progress in reading as would be expected and attained significantly greater gains in math compared with students of other teachers, including veteran and certified teachers. Mathematica is currently replicating this study with new data as part of Teach For America's i3 scale-up grant. This national, randomized study is scheduled for release in 2015.

Additionally, Mathematica is conducting an [experimental study](#) about the impact of teachers trained through highly selective routes to alternative certification, such as Teach For America and The New Teacher Project, on high school math achievement. This study is scheduled for release in 2013.

PRINCIPAL SATISFACTION

For the past 16 years, Teach For America has commissioned independent, external surveys of school leaders who manage corps members. The results of these surveys validate research about our classroom impact. In 2011, 87 percent of over 1,800 principals in our partnership regions reported high levels of satisfaction with Teach For America and noted that corps members are as effective as, and in many cases more effective than, beginning teachers in their schools. Eighty-eight percent of principals reported that corps members are at least as effective as veteran teachers. In addition, 87 percent of school leaders said Teach For America corps members' training is at least as effective as the training of other beginning teachers, and more than half found corps members' training to be more effective.

SELECTION MODEL EFFECTIVENESS

A [2011 Harvard University study](#) found that Teach For America's selection model successfully identifies teachers who will have a positive impact on student achievement. The study finds that the selection criteria, as a whole, helps predict who will be most successful right out of the gate in their first year of teaching. More specifically, the findings show that three competencies are associated with student gains in math and two with gains in English during a teacher's first year in the classroom.

ALUMNI LEADERSHIP AND OUR IMPACT BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Teach For America works to ensure that our corps members become lifelong advocates and leaders for causes that expand educational opportunity. After more than 20 years, our network of nearly 28,000 alumni includes some of the nation's most influential and effective advocates for children and students. A [2011 study](#) by researchers from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and the American Enterprise Institute, published in the policy journal *Education Next*, concluded that more founders and top leaders of entrepreneurial education organizations started their careers with Teach For America than any other government program, organization, or company.

Another [2011 Harvard University study](#) found that Teach For America strengthens participants' conviction in the academic potential of all children regardless of income level or race, and increases racial tolerance among participants across all racial groups. In addition, the experience increases the likelihood that participants will pursue a career in the education sector.

For a comprehensive summary of research on Teach For America, visit www.teachforamerica.org/research.