

THE CENTER FOR BETTER SCHOOLS

Project Update February 28, 2010

75 DAY UPDATE ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The purpose of this short briefing is to bring selected friends of The Center for Better Schools up to date on recent activities, contacts and accomplishments since mid-December 2009.

Picking up where we left off in mid-December, we have made progress on all fronts in the last 75 days. With the help of several part time researchers, we have pushed on the **economic modeling**, the gathering of **curricular ideas** and the twofold objectives of developing best practices on the admissions front and querying early career teachers (**selectivity**).

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS, FINDINGS, TOP ORGANIZATIONS AND RECENT CONTACTS

In no particular order, here are a handful of observations, findings, top organizations we have encountered and recent contacts made.

We are the only program focused on early career teachers (not new entrants)

- There are very few (if any) other programs which, like The Center for Better Schools, are focused exclusively on better career development/advanced training concepts for **early career teachers**. All other university-based programs, teacher residencies, alternative certification programs, and other local and national efforts are designed to attract new entrants to the classroom teaching profession. This is much needed work, meeting with good success on a number of fronts, but does not concentrate on retaining talented, early career teachers.

Teacher turnover rates probably overstated.

- The much reported defection of public school teachers, which some researchers report to be approximating 250,000 teachers annually, seems to be overstated, particularly given the recent downturn in the economy.
 - While the figures for high poverty schools are still higher than the overall national figures, they probably do not approach the 25% figures reported
 - As a small example: Providence RI which hosts 6 of the state's 7 worst performing high schools and a total of roughly 2,000 public school teachers had virtually no turnover in the last school year.
 - This reduced turnover, given rampant poor performance, is not necessarily a good thing, but it changes the scale of the challenge

Early career turnover of 20% common across first job holders.

- Even if the rate of turnover of new teachers were still in the low 20% range (which given the state of the economy, we doubt), it is really on par with many other first post-baccalaureate jobs for young adults such as: systems analysis, corporate sales, child care, social work and accounting. They all have early career turnover rates higher than 20%.

How many truly great classroom teachers are really needed?

- While the ambition to put a highly qualified teacher in every classroom is noble, it flies in the face of realistic staffing models and human resource experiences in every other sector of the workforce.
 - No organization operates with 100% high performing personnel in every position
 - Between kindergarten and 12th grade most American students have between 30 and 40 teachers (with some overlap/repeats). How many truly great teachers can you remember from your own K-12 experiences? Some, not all.
 - If we apply a mixed model of teacher performance, we may need as few as 150,000 truly great teachers another 150,000 good teachers and 600,000 merely adequate teachers in our high poverty classrooms (one year of student achievement per year of school = adequate).
 - Producing 15,000 to 20,000 truly great teachers annually seems like a very solvable problem on a national basis (more on this in future reports).

Here are some other exciting programs in place to attract and support talent in the teaching profession

- Teach for America (TFA), The New Teacher Project (TNTP) and the leading charter school organizations set standards of excellence for closing our country's achievement gap. Additional organizations which we have seen in our travels that are doing very exciting work attracting and retaining high quality teachers are highlighted below:
 - The urban teacher residency programs sprouting up around the country, led from Chicago by the Urban Teacher Residencies United, are tackling issues of selectivity, training content and mentoring in novel ways (www.utrunited.org)
 - The Urban Teacher Center being developed in Baltimore for new teachers, with some novel ideas about curriculum, induction and support (www.urbanteachercenter.org)
 - Teach Plus in Boston MA, the brainchild of Celine Coggins, is building networks of high performing public school teachers and creating channels for their ideas about the profession beyond the classroom (www.teachplus.org)
 - The New Teacher Center in Santa Cruz, CA is working on crucial mentoring activities for early career teachers (www.newteachercenter.org)
 - U of Texas UTEACH math and science teacher recruitment and training efforts, which are being rolled out in a number of replication sites nationally (www.uteach.org)
 - UTEP of the University of Chicago, another university-based program truly focused on the unique requirements of high poverty school settings and the specialized training required for teaching there (www.utep.uchicago.edu)
 - The ACE Program of Notre Dame University, sometimes referred to as the TFA of Catholic Schools, and its many offspring programs at other Catholic colleges and universities, trading two years in a poor Catholic School classroom for a Masters in Education (www.ace.nd.edu)
 - UKA Teacher U, (www.teacheru.org) created under the direction of Norman Atkins, Founder of Uncommon Schools and in partnership with KIPP and Achievement First charter schools (and CUNY Hunter College), this NYC-based program trains approximately 500 new teachers each year (and growing) with a curriculum tailored to the needs of high poverty classrooms (see mention of Doug Lemov below)

Contacts since December 15th. This does not include ongoing dialog with previous folks such as Tim Daly, Norman Atkins, Seth Andrew, Michael Podgursky, Ed Kirby, Tammy Battaglino, Tom Doyle or Jeff Wetzler or preliminary contacts with others.

Dr. Julie Mikuta	Partner	Newschools Venture Fund	San Francisco	CA	Meeting
Mr. Vin Buonanno	President, CEO	Tempel Steel	Chicago	IL	Meeting
Ms. Cindy Lyons		Lyons Family Foundation	Boston	MA	Meeting
Mr. Jim Southern	Partner	Pacific Lake Capital	Boston	MA	Meeting
Prof. Tom Esienmann	Professor	Harvard Business School	Boston	MA	Meeting
Ms. Jill Greenthal	Partner	Blackstone Group	Boston	MA	Meeting
Ms. Jane Brock-Wilson	Partner	Berkshire Partners	Boston	MA	Meeting
Prof. Kavita Kapadia	Director	UTEP U of Chicago	Chicago	IL	Meeting
Prof. Tim Knowles	Director	UTEP U of Chicago	Chicago	IL	Email Xch
Mr. Whitney Tilson	CEO	Tilson Funds	New York	NY	Meeting
Mr. Jeremy Chiappetta	Founder	Democracy Prep B V	Cumberland	RI	Meeting
Ms. Jeanne Allen	Founder CEO	Center for Education Reform	Washington	DC	Meeting
Mr. Michael Sandler	Founder	Eduventures National Center for Urban Education	Washington	DC	Meeting
Mr. Andy Rotherham	Founder VP Career	Education Sector	Washington	DC	Meeting
Ms. Heather Anichini	Leadership Initiatives	Teach for America Urban Teacher Residencies	Chicago	IL	Meeting
Ms. Anissa Listak	Director	United Urban Teacher Residencies	Chicago	IL	Meeting
Ms. Sonia Mathew	Network Manager	United	Chicago	IL	Meeting
Prof. Merola Sundt	Assoc. Dean	USC School of Education	Los Angeles	CA	Meeting
Ms. Lisa Garvin	Associate	USC School of Education	Los Angeles	CA	Call
Ms. Kim Smith	Founder Director, Career	Newschools Venture Fund	Napa	CA	Meeting
Ms. Tamara Arroyo	Leadership Initiatives	Teach for America	San Francisco	CA	Meeting
Mr. John Danner	Founder President	Rocketship Education	San Jose	CA	Meeting
Mr. David Feinberg	Director	Rocketship Education	San Jose	CA	Meeting
Mr. Bill Oberndorf	Founder, Partner	SPO Partners	San Francisco	CA	Meeting
Ms. Cara Delzer	Chief of Staff	New Teacher Center	Santa Cruz	CA	Call
Dr. Ellen Moir	Founder	New Teacher Center	Santa Cruz	CA	
Mr. Steve Farkas	President	The FDR Group	New York	NY	Meeting
Dr. Ann Duffett	Partner	The FDR Group	New York	NY	Meeting
Dr. Bryan Hassell	Co-Director	Public Impact	Chapel Hill	NC	Call
Mr. Rob Birdsell	President	Cristo-Rey Network	Chicago	IL	Call
Ms. Colleen Dippel	Director	Aquinas Companies	Houston	TX	Call
Dr. Tamara Schiff	Sr. VP	NIET & TAP	Santa Monica	CA	Call
Mr. Doug Lemov	Founder	True North Charter Schools	Troy	NY	Meeting
Mr. Terry Brown	President	St. Anthony School	Milwaukee	WI	Meeting
Mr. Preston Smith	Chief Academic Officer	Rocketship Education	Palo Alto	CA	Meeting
Dr. Celine Coggins	Founder	Teach Plus Education Initiative	Boston	MA	Meeting
Mr. Jamie Gass	Director	Pioneer Institute	Boston	MA	Meeting
Ms. Jennifer Green	Co-Founder	Urban Teacher Center	Baltimore	MD	Call
Ms. Christina Hall	Co-Founder Director, Prof.	Urban Teacher Center	Baltimore	MD	Email Xch
Ms. Heather Kirkpatrick	Development	Aspire Public Schools	Oakland	CA	Call
Mr. James Willcox	Founder	Aspire Public Schools	Oakland	CA	
Dean Jon Snyder	Graduate Education Senior Recruitment	Bank Street School	New York	NY	Meeting
Mr. Jonathan Howard	Manager	Democracy Prep	New York	NY	Meeting
Mr. Chuck Lamphier	Director, ACE Fellowship	ACE Program Notre Dame	South Bend	IN	Call
Mr. Larry Rosenstock	Founder	High Tech High	San Diego	CA	Meeting
Mr. Ben Daley	COO Director, Policy & Research	High Tech High	San Diego	CA	Meeting
Ms. Laura McBain	Director, Teacher Leadership Program	High Tech High	San Diego	CA	Meeting
Dr. Stacey Caillier	Director, School Leadership Program	High Tech High	San Diego	CA	Meeting
Ms. Kelly Wilson	Leadership Program	High Tech High Ctr for Reinventing Education	San Diego	CA	Meeting
Dr. Marguerite Roza	Asst Professor	U of Wash.	Seattle	WA	Email Xch
Dr. Karen Hawley-Miles	Founder	Education Resource Strategies	Boston	MA	Call
Mr. Leo Linbeck III	President	Aquinas Companies	Houston	TX	Email Xch

ON THE STRUCTURE OF THE PROPOSED PROGRAM:

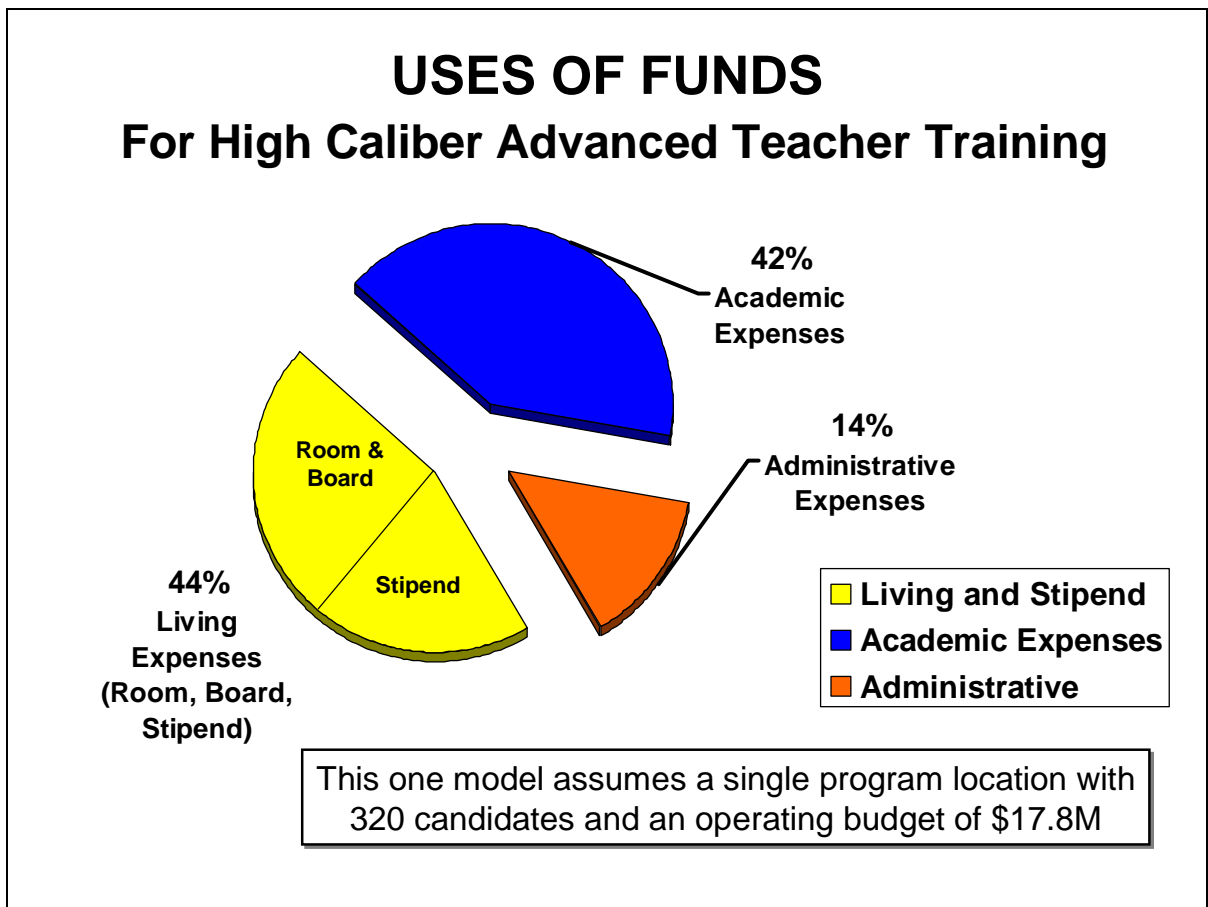
From the “one city large scale school” idea to the “numerous small schools” idea, our latest thinking, for economic (and other) reasons, would be to ideally establish (long term) perhaps up to four campuses serving 320 students each. These campuses would be located in urban centers, geographically distributed across the country, loosely serving their geographies (e.g., west, south, north, east). This is still to be determined.

ON FINANCIAL MODELING:

We are still grinding through the sources and uses of funds, but have the following to report.

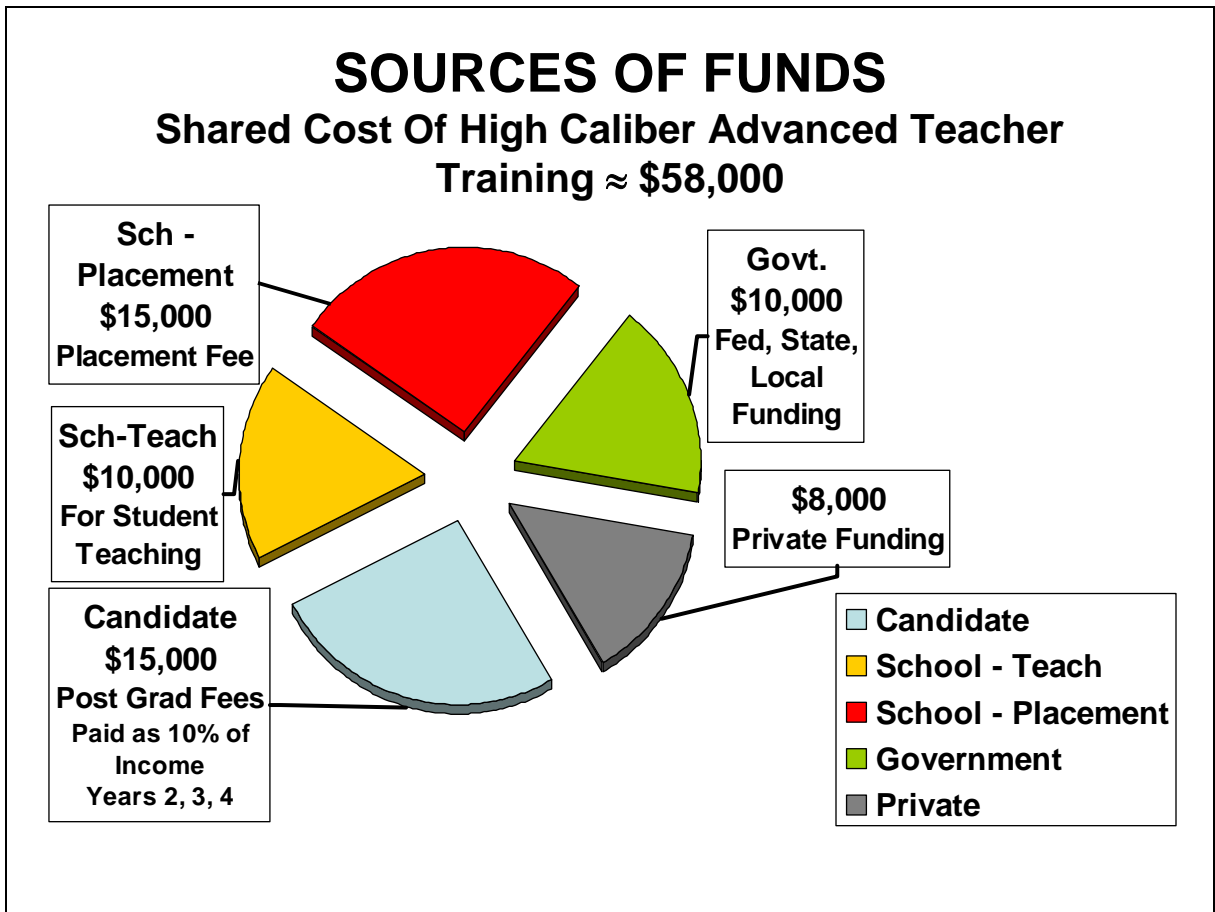
Uses of Funds

The estimated cost per student at this point is ≈ \$58,000, which is in line with other programs [teacher residencies (\$35K - \$65K per year), West Point (≈ \$60K per year), Harvard Business School (≈ \$46K plus room and board)] and seems like a reasonable target. Our costs will depend on the ultimate scale of the program, and we are working that out now (how many students? multiple campuses?). Below are some preliminary breakdowns of cost categories against a total estimate of ≈ \$58,000 (yet to be fully addressed are post-graduation mentoring and professional development costs and how best to account for health care and other direct student costs).



Sources of Funds

The primary objective here is to align the costs of the program with its intended beneficiaries, namely the candidates themselves, the schools in which they student teach (during the program), the schools and districts in which they are placed (upon program completion), the federal, state and local governmental agencies responsible for teacher quality and high poverty student outcomes, and as the “last money in,” private funding sources committed to closing the achievement gap. The following chart shows current thinking on this distribution.



Other Notes on Financing

We are getting the help of two architectural firms, a facilities manager, an owner’s representative and a real estate broker to try to determine space requirements, refined square footage costs and various build out scenarios (in different cities). We have also gotten help on room and board costs from a food service vendor. (All this work is being provided pro bono.)

We are still digging into the opportunities to secure governmental funding (near term and longer term) through Title I, Title II and other programs.

While we have numerous research sources estimating the cost to individuals and society of not getting a good public school education (i.e., dropping out), we are still trying to tie some

of that data to the impact of high performing teachers. The intention is to quantify, if possible, the value of a good teacher. We'll see if we can get there.

ON CURRICULUM:

We have gathered information from a variety of sources on potential elements of an advanced teacher training program curriculum. Teach for America, The ACE Program at Notre Dame, UTEP (Chicago), Bank Street School, Boston Teacher Residency, Alverno College, UKA Teacher U have all been helpful. Soon we will be reviewing the work of the Urban Teacher Center and others as well.

Additionally, as a program targeting experienced teachers, TCBS has an opportunity to include elements not appropriate or applicable to new teachers in induction programs. We are studying how program content would be altered by candidates all experienced in the classroom. (e.g., adult learning skills, mentoring and complex assessment techniques).

Beyond the world of teacher preparation, methods from other sectors are also being reviewed. The Acton School of Business (www.actonmba.org) uses a pre-enrollment period to conduct intensive offsite training activities. Some version of this will be incorporated into our program.

In some respects curriculum is the least developed aspect of our feasibility work thus far for several reasons. First, several efforts to hire appropriate adjunct resources to move this along were thwarted (e.g., dissertations, baby arrivals, fees). Other priorities have also taken precedence. I am confident however that we will have what we need inside the next 90 days, pretty much as planned.

Other activities within the Curriculum Effort

- We did attend the two day Doug Lemov training session in late January in Albany NY. There were 70+ participants almost exclusively teachers, teacher leaders and school principals from charter, district and faith-based schools. The two day session was a powerful reminder of what good technique, taught well, to a receptive audience can do for improved classroom teaching. Doug is an extraordinary individual and the leader of a group of Uncommon Schools. His repository of teaching tools and techniques will surely find their way into our proposed advanced training program.
- Teach for America published their book which takes the reader through their approach to training in great detail. It too is a valuable reference tool and another window into why Teach for America is as successful as it is. (*Teaching as Classroom Leadership*, Steve Farr, 2010). We will study it and its potential role in our curriculum.

ON PROGRAM CANDIDATE SELECTIVITY (WHO WILL GET INTO THE PROGRAM?):

We have a two-pronged effort underway in the selectivity and admissions area. First, we are looking at highly selective admissions procedures and we are also preparing to survey early career teachers.

Highly Effective Admissions Procedures

To repeat, only teachers who have experience and can demonstrate previous success in the classroom will be considered for candidacy to our program. While researching this sector we have discovered large potential demand for a program such as the one we are exploring. The target audience (early career teachers with talent, contemplating a career in the classroom) have very few top caliber programs to choose from today and fewer still focused exclusively on high poverty classroom teaching. In spite of this, there is existing demand for full time teacher preparation. As a point of reference, by our count, there are over 5,000 full time graduate students studying to be teachers in the “top” 45 programs in the country [according to US News and World Report] paying a range from \$27,000 to \$60,000 in tuition, room and board. (Add to this the other 1,150 Schools of Education.)

We have been capturing best admissions procedures and practices at other professional development schools (Schools of Education, Business, Law, Medicine), at highly selective undergraduate institutions, at organizations that recruit top college graduates and other organizations known for strong practices and highly competitive admissions hurdles.

Early Career Teacher Survey Work

The other prong of the Selectivity Project is an attempt to determine which early career teachers might have a propensity to stay in the classroom for a long period of time (a career) and how to determine the truly great ones. With the help of The FDR Group (www.thefdrgroup.com), a NY-based market research firm with extensive experience in the education field, we are embarking on some critical research, which we hope will make a significant contribution to the field. In the first week of March we are conducting two focus groups with early career teachers to probe the following areas:

- Profiles, wants, needs of early career teachers
- Alternative career choices
- Appetite for the kind of high octane, highly selective advanced education program we envision
- Thoughts on content for such an advanced educational program
- An attempt to sort responses by level of achievement as teachers (merely good to truly great)

The results of the focus group will be turned into a survey instrument which will be hosted on the web. The following groups have agreed to share it with their early career teachers. Our goal is to reach 10,000 folks and yield roughly 1,000 completed surveys. We are very excited about this work and the cooperation of some of the finest organizations and charter schools in the nation.

- **Participating**

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ▪ Teach for America | Boston Charter High School |
| ▪ Notre Dame's ACE Program | Teach Plus Fellows |
| ▪ Democracy Prep Charter Schools | UTEP (U Chicago) |
| ▪ Rocketship Education | Brighter Choice Schools |
| ▪ Match Charter High School | KIPP Houston |
| ▪ Yes Prep Charter Schools | U TEACH (U Texas) |
| ▪ Cristo-Rey Network | National Heritage Academies |

Results should be available in the April-May timeframe.

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE:

We formalized a small Board of Directors which includes Mr. Mark Beaudouin, Dr. Michael Bonin and Mr. Robert Walkingshaw. To give you a sense of their diverse backgrounds and talents, we have included short biographies on the Team page of our website.

Our relationship with the Brighter Choice Foundation has worked very well.

In order to make sure we have sufficient funds to complete the total feasibility project (projected end date as originally discussed is still September 2010), we are out actively looking at raising the final tranche of funding, which we expect to be +/- \$120,000. We are in early discussions with several potential investors to secure this funding. Any additional thoughts here are always welcome.

While our first wave of talented "junior researcher," college graduates (see the Team page of the website) have moved on to a Guggenheim Fellowship, The Walden Woods Project and the Software & Information Industry Association, we have another crew in the wings supporting our web and communications work and our Selectivity project. They will join the Team page of the website soon.

In summary, we believe we are making the maximum use of scarce resources, we feel we are on track to deliver the body of information promised at the outset and we are very encouraged about the emerging shape and feel of the "West Point of Teacher Training."

That is all for now. More soon. Thank you again for your interest and support. Feedback welcome as always.

All the best,



Founder & President